MEMORIES

by B. F. KEITH

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By

B. F. KEITH

Catti or Keith.

"Truth and Honesty Will Conquer"

RALEIGH
BYNUM PRINTING COMPANY
1922

INTRODUCTION

About the year 175— a family landed at Fernandina, Florida, having journeyed from Scotland in a sailing vessel. They were, of course, unknown to many on this side, but, in their own country, they had held a proud position. The war in which the house of Stuart fell saw many proud houses as noble as theirs fall, too. History fails to explain why so many noble and wise heads of families jeopardized their name and fortune by alliance with that unfortunate house of Stuart. Buchanan the historian says that the only way he can account for this noble family's adherence is that old Scotch saw which says, "Blood is thicker than water." In early days many centuries before even the royal house of Stuart was heard of, they had been entrusted with the royal seal and a member of their family had been continuously recognized as "Keeper of the Royal Seal" until the year referred to. They had married and intermarried with royalty, and so "Blood is thicker than water" certainly applied to them. In that one venture they sacrificed a position which had been won through centuries upholding the crown of Scotland against all comers. After-events prove that the prowess that won fame and fortune as well as position did not die with the dynasty of Stuart. European history teems with incidents that show their statesmanship, and military records fully attest their unfailing leadership of men.

After sailing up the St. Marie river this branch of the family lived in Georgia for some time, then gradually moved up into South Carolina, where the father and mother, who had come direct from Scotland, died. Their offspring became some of the most prominent people in that state, and their descendants are noted for their high and progressive ideals, standing for those things that are for truth and justice, to the poor as well as to the well-to-do classes. It was

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a characteristic handed down to them, their Coat of Arms, bestowed upon them by their king, crossed check, motto, "Truth and Honesty will Conquer."

The lad who was the miller boy for Marion lived in South Carolina until the beginning of old age, having married three times. He then moved to North Carolina with his brother, who later returned. Locating in the Cape Fear section, he proceeded to enter large tracts of land, an instinct inherited from progenitors in Scotland, they having large landed estates, bestowed upon them by their king for noble service to their country. It was still in the blood of the miller boy to acquire land where he saw possibility of its worth. Having lost his third wife, he married the fourth time after he came to North Carolina, his wife being the daughter of a prominent citizen who served as an officer in the Revolutionary war. His activity caused him much ill-treatment by the British Tories, being placed in the "Bull Pen" (as it was called). His stock, cattle, hogs, etc., were used by their army. He was fed, with the others imprisoned with him, with the offal thrown over the pen to them, as it is thrown to hogs. They milked his cows, consumed the milk and butter, and when he complained to the officers, they would tell him he ought to be proud that he could do so much for his mother country.

The old Bull Pen was at the north end of an old milldam that was built years before the Revolution by Englishmen and Welshmen. It was in commission, grinding and sawing, with the old up-and-down saws. The same old mill has been in operation ever since, except when it was stopped for the woodwork to be repaired or rebuilt, as it was about twenty-five years ago. This work required two hundred thousand feet of heart cypress framing, and nearly three years to do the job. Many were skeptical when they saw it torn up, saying that they never expected to get any more good meal from the favored old mill, the rocks of which had been brought from England by its first builders so long before the Revolu-

tionary war that the oldest inhabitants could not remember when it was built. The skeptical also said that it would never be as it was, as its first builders had a barrel of gold when they began building it, and it was said that it took it all to finish the job. They knew that its second builders (Bennie and his brother) had nothing to compare with a barrel of gold. However, they neglected to put any value on energy, perseverance and determination, nor did they appreciate the advantage of looking forward instead of backwards. Some of these same doubters are still living and eating bread ground at the old mill, affirming that there is none so good anywhere. When the mill gets out of order for a few days they begin to get nervous, and vow that they cannot eat any other bread, as it is the only kind that gives them health.

Marion's miller boy, then settled in North Carolina and married the fourth time, selected a place as near like the old family home in Scotland as he could, guided by descriptions given him by his parents in years gone by. His home being between two streams of water, he named one after the one that surrounded the old home in Scotland, and it has been known by that name ever since; it is the pride of anglers. The following verses will better describe its charm:

"CALEDONIA"

Oh, sweet old Caledonia, the sacred home,
Where the passing river kisses the sacred shore,
The land where sacred memories dwell,
With its forest tinged with beauty throwing kisses to the skies.

No, we can never forget the beautiful Caledonia,
Never while life ebbs and flows on earth,
For such sacred places have their finals in Heaven,
Then why not rejoice when its beauty is so sublime?

Oh, sweet Caledonia, where the sun and moon
First peep from the east out in their radiant light,
Will ever hold the place next to eternal life,
May its beauty and sacredness ever hold the key of right.

Sweet Caledonia, the home nearest to the skies,
Where the beautiful old river goes gleaming by,
Noted for its traffic as with fish and game,
Where the anglers and hunters can find no complaint.

The flowing Spring at old Caledonia, always so pure and sweet,
Brings us back to the sweet, innocent days of our youth,
Where pain and sorrow had no light in our life,
Where the sun, moon and stars were the light so beautiful and bright.

Old Caledonia was the sweet home on Scotland's heights,
Where the first Earl Marichal saw first the light,
For centuries there the Seal of Scotland was kept right,
Until the love of liberty gave the Chatties new life and light.

Thence to America some did flee for liberty and rights,
While others to Spain, Russia and Prussia,
There to give counsel to the kings and rulers of their day,
Holding the highest positions in all their day.

Those to America have always been true to their adopted home,
The young lads, with their dads, shoulder their guns,
When the Revolution was over, we had won,
Battled, with bare feet, lads along with their dads.

Caledonia, for centuries the home of our noble sires,
Until no more in old Scotland, beautiful land,
Now transplanted on Caledonia Creek in Carolina,
Where for century its sacredness held by noble descendants of
William Catti.

Oh, sing of sweet Caledonia the sacred place,
It's home the child should learn to love,
It brings love and tenderness to dear ones
Whose toils and anxiety have worn them away.

MEMORIES

By B. F. Keith

CHAPTER I

BABYHOOD

The fate of man is in the hands of an all-wise Providence, and whether we admit it or not, we know that He rules all things. Man proposes, but God disposes, is as true now as ever. And the blessed thought that comforts when nothing else will, is that He who looketh after the sparrow will surely watch over those who trust Him.

Two years before the war (what war ever took such a toll?) between the states, in a country home well off the main thoroughfare, there was born a child to parents who were blessed with just enough of this world's store. The home was a log cabin, humble as any, yet comfortable and roomy, as nearly all such homes were. Soon that home became too small to accommodate the family, and a move was made to a new home several miles away. The child spoken of above was two years old by this time. All thought to live in peace and happiness and plenty, but, alas! for the plans of man. Not long after coming to the new home the baby boy fell down the steps and at first was thought killed. The mother was in bed sick, but when she heard the cry she did what nearly ever other mother would have done under the same circumstances—got out as quickly as she could. All the old-time remedies were put to use to assuage the pain while the mother-voice spoke words of endearment to the little sufferer. Who can say which was most effective? Sufficient to know that soon the baby eyes opened, and then mother hugged him as only mothers can. Oh, what a memory of mother! Soon after that, mother went back to bed, never to be well again on this earth. Oh, the memories fostered by

the tales of the mammy nurse, whose duty it was to take the little one to the bedside, so that mother could see and caress the little one she was so soon to leave behind. What a picture of mother that little boy sees now. After all these years, after all the crosses that have come—Mother—there in her chair, with the big Bible on her lap; the child catching hold of her dress, and with her help, standing there while mother's feeble hands turned the leaves for him to see the pretty pictures. Oh, how lovingly those hands stroked his head, how tender her voice as she spoke words of endearment to the little boy she knew she soon must leave and who would never know the tender care of a Christian mother's love. Yet even at that tender age little Bennie (that was the name the mother had given her boy) always felt that the prayers of mother to Him who promised to be a Father to the fatherless and a helper to all who need His help, were especially answered in his case. As a result Bennie's faith in prayer grows stronger every day. Well, about this time politics became hot, and people who thought, might have stepped to the front and insisted on being heard; but, alas, they showed timidity when they should have shown strength. Very soon in the excitement of war, conservative thinkers were thrust into the background and the wild-eyed agitator held the stage. As usual many of the red-hot war lords preferred jobs at home looking after the women and children (at least that was their excuse), but after-events showed that they were most interested in their own personal gain. If any man dared to oppose, well—a place was quickly found for him at the front; if they never came back, so much the better. Then as now, and even to the end of life's chapter. When the reports came as to how our boys were whipping the Yankees, it gave courage to our Southern boys, and all wanted to go and have a hand in the finishing of the job right, but after four long years of greatest sacrifice on the part of the half-fed, half-clothed Southern army, well, every school-boy knows the result—overpowered by circumstances, but not beaten.

After days of bombardment, Fort Fisher fell, and the last artery that was left to the Southern army was gone. The vibrations of the cannon jarred the windows in the house in which Bennie lived, and even rocked the chairs upstairs—this at a distance of forty miles. Bennie remembers being sent by his stepmother upstairs to get something, and windows and chairs were rocking and jarring so continuously that he became scared and ran downstairs to say that it was not there! Being told to go back, he found the thing on a chair which he had to pass around; the house was not shaking so badly then as the first time. In fear he was looking to see the Yankees coming every moment. The larger colored children kept the smaller white children in dread of the coming of the Yankees. They told them the Yankees would kill all who had not been good to them (the negroes). By such means they managed to get from Bennie what his colored mammy gave him, and often Mammy Fanny had to look for a switch and threaten to whip them when Bennie told what they had said about "Marse Yankee" and what they would do to Bennie if he did not do so-and-so for them. If he did, then they would promise to tell "Marse Yankee" that he was a good boy, and so he would not be killed or hurt. When mammy heard them teasing him she would gather her switches and start on the nearest one, then she would draw Bennie close to her and tell him that the Yankees would not touch him nor his sisters, as they were all good and obedient children, and as such the Yankees would be good to them. As all the slaves loved their master and mistress, who had treated them as members of the family, the promise that "Ma Fanny" had made to Bennie's mother on her deathbed that she would always look after Bennie and protect him from evil as best she could, was never forgotten, and the love of Bennie's mother was augmented by the love of his colored mammy. With old-time devotion (now, alas, too seldom seen) her prayers went continuously up to heaven for the motherless boy left in her charge. Only those who have ex-

perienced it can appreciate what such a love means. Mother-love has seldom had an equal on earth, but the "old South" often found its counterpart in the affection of the old-time colored mammy.

TO MOTHER

A mother's love, say who can gauge its depth, its breadth, its height!
It watches o'er us in the day and through the stormy night.
And when the storm-clouds gather black around the childish head,
They're driven away by mother's prayers, from the side of the trundle-bed.

DEDICATED TO REAL MOTHERS

The loving mother over her family doth watch,
With a love so strong no one on it can make a blot,
With her routine work she presses day by day,
All for the love she has for her tender babes.

Once they were small but now they may be large,
Yet mother cannot forget they are still in her charge.
When old and weary, tired out with work and pain,
She still thinks of her children as babies again.

The sweet loving mother whose hands are so light and kind,
Can soothe the pains as no other hand can do,
All because it's mother, so true and pure,
When she comes to our sick bed we no longer have the blues.

So you, to you who have lost their mother,
The world can no more be as kind to you again,
For the life that first gave you light has gone,
If you had been her dutiful child you need not weep when you think of her.

To you who still have your mother,
Help to make her life bright while you can.
If you do you will not have the sorrowing regret,
As so many who to her their duty forget.

CHAPTER II

WAR

While Bennie's father and his uncle did not think it wise for the South to secede (they realized that the South, in the end, would have the whole world to fight) yet when their influence was overcome by the fierce war spirit, and believing that each State, under the Constitution, had a right to regulate its own affairs, and after all offers of compromise had been rejected, either by the North or the South, and while both of them could have sent substitutes, (as many of the slave owners did), they preferred to serve their home-land by going in person, leaving their plantations to the care of overseers. While they were almost beyond the age limit when they left their homes to defend their country, they wanted to do their full duty, leaving the consequences to the all-wise Providence who does all things for the best. Both went to the call most urgent, which was at Fort Fisher. The elder brother was not there long. He had taken some of his slaves who were needed to help throw up breastworks, build forts, etc. One morning when the muster roll was called, the senior brother did not answer; upon making a search, he was found dead in his bed from heart trouble. His body was sent back to his old home to be put in its long resting place, where his father and mother were put to rest when he and his brother were mere children. Their father had been in General Marion's army when he was but a lad of sixteen years and ground corn at a water-mill for the army near Darlington, South Carolina, so continuously day and night, that the rocks become so hot that they crumbled to pieces like clay.

The miller had had four children by his fourth wife, two sons and two daughters. The sons were the ones that marched to Fort Fisher, the elder dying, the younger being

transferred to the commissary department to feed the army at the Fort on tithes gathered from the Piedmont section, his headquarters being at a thriving little town in that section. He operated from this base, buying and assessing those who could spare food above what they needed for their own plantations. The supplies thus gathered were sent to the Fort for the army that was protecting the gateway of the Southern Confederacy. While engaged in this work, he often met face to face with the notorious Henry Berry Lowery gang of outlaws. Those who were active in the war and dared to inform on the gang, stood in peril of being killed at any time. When met by the tithe gatherer and his men, they were spoken to and passed by. Not once were the officers of the commissary ever molested, the leader being considerate toward all. When the news reached him in a day or two of the fall of Fort Fisher, he knew that it meant defeat to the Confederate army, word coming with the news of its capture that it was the last Fort to fall and that all would go to their homes. Making ready to start, he had his horse saddled and hitched at the back of his office, his knapsack and other accoutrements being attached in readiness for the trip. While inside engaged in gathering up his papers and other documents belonging to the Confederacy, he heard several gun shots within a short distance of his office. Going to the front door, he saw one of the men who was detailed to help him running up the street; behind him the street was filled with Yankees, many of them shooting at his fleeing comrade, dressed in his long-tailed dress suit of homespun (he had just diked out to return home to his family). The subject of the present narrative watched with deep concern the flight of his friend, who, with coat-tail flying behind him like a swallow's tail, finally escaped with his life. Being so interested in his comrade's safety, he forgot himself until he was surrounded by hundreds of Sherman's soldiers when he was ordered out of his office to fall in line. He had changed to his Sunday suit, made

out of woolen homespun woven at home. The first question asked him by the Yankees was, "What have you been doing in the service?" By telling a lie and saying that he was only a plain citizen, he would not have been bothered. However, he was not accustomed to tell anything but the truth and he told it in this instance. "You are a d——d old militiaman," he was told, and then ordered to fall in line. He informed them that he had had a crippled foot since a boy and could walk very little, and added that he had a horse saddled in the back yard which he wanted to ride so that he could make the march. He was sent with a couple of soldiers to bring him out, as he thought, for his own use, but one of the officers admired the horse so much that he insisted on trying him out. After mounting the horse, he rode down the line of march at a gallop and has been going ever since, as he never returned with the long-looked-for horse.

Robbed of everything worth having, he was placed in line with thousands of other Confederate soldiers. It was in the dead of winter and they had to march through sleet, snow, and rain, through mud and water, by Raleigh, Goldsboro, and on to New Bern, taking three months to make the journey. They often had to rebuild the roads before the army wagons could pass.

During this time their food consisted of ear corn from five to eight ears per man. At night with their skillets they would boil it; sometimes for a new diet they would parch it. They never had anything else, unless they chanced to find a shoulder bone, from which the officers had cut the part suitable for frying and tossed the bone away. The lucky finder in such a case would have his skillet greased for the parched corn, or have bacon and boiled corn that night. The cooking was all done at night, so as to be ready to march from early dawn until the next night when camp was struck and roped around. Those who forgot and stepped across the dead line after a chip that chanced to fly over when chopping wood for their sumptuous meal were

shot by the guard. Many having no teeth to grind it had to swallow it whole, except what could be mashed by the gums. If seen crossing the camp line, they were shot by the guard, and killed as if they had committed murder. Their bedding was one tattered blanket and their resting place often in mud and water. Sometimes they would sit up, rather than lie in mud and water.

The poor old toothless prisoners, most of them too old for service, suffered more than the others, especially those who came from South Carolina. They would be up half the night, boiling their corn, munching and trying to eat it. Many of them were found lifeless in the mornings, their ragged blankets wrapped around them, sleeping the last long sleep. They were put into the ground as so many hogs during a cholera epidemic, with no friend who could help them, nor relative to know their last resting place. They would only be reported as missing, or buried among the unknown. Can any sane Christian say that war is not the worst product of Satan's manufacture? No war is justified unless it is a war of defense, in which case no red-blooded man will shirk his duty, but the war lords should not be the judge of what is defense. Rather it should be left to those who have to face death on the firing lines and to those who have to foot the bills for its cost—the tax-payers.

When New Bern was reached, the prisoners were put upon steamers and taken to Point Lookout, there to be fed upon hardtack with a little salt pork, the latter so negligible in quantity that it hardly kept life in a system already run down for lack of nourishment. The hardtack was baked so long that worms had finished their feasting before the starved prisoners had their first peep at it. Many died from starvation. Some would wade into the water up to their waists and necks, feeling with their bare feet for old bones and what other garbage was emptied from off the walkway. The finder of a bone would dive down for it, and, bringing it to the surface, would gnaw upon it like a perished dog.

When the prisoner had been in this mad-house about three weeks, he almost gave up hope of living much longer. He thought with bitter longing of the plentiful food that he had enjoyed on the farm, the game and fish, lamb, beef, fresh pork and the old fried ham, and all other dishes suitable for a king to feast upon, prepared by the best-trained cooks, whose art was handed down from mammy cook to daughter. Along with such tantalizing recollections came memories of the old friends who had enjoyed such luxury, who often came miles out of their way while passing on their journey to spend the night, often days, in this hospitable home. Here the guest and his team found plenty of the best, with a proud nobleman, as he was called, whose delight it was to entertain his guests and make their visit a long-remembered pleasure. Rich or poor, the guests were given a welcome that made them desire to return to the home where the hostess showed that training which was an inheritance from centuries of noble blood. This rich legacy is manifested, even in modest circumstances, as it is always forgetful of self.

Despairing and ready to give up hope, he one day met a boy, or rather a young officer, who had been raised almost in poverty a few miles from his home. This young man, while only a lad, ran away from his parents and joined the army, although too young for the service. He afterwards heard that his mother was sick (which may have been true, or not, as many mothers and families thoughtlessly wrote distressing letters to their sons and fathers). His captain refused to grant him a furlough; but, determined to see his mother, he ran away, going home as a deserter. He received a message from his company to return, which he refused to do, probably through fear of punishment. A posse of men was sent to bring him in, dead or alive, but, seeing them in time, he grabbed his gun and ran for the woods. They fired on him, whereupon he turned his gun on them and fired also. By chance, the ball struck the captain of the squad and killed

him. The boy was later surrounded and captured, was handcuffed and sent on the train to Goldsboro, there to be court-martialed and, no doubt, shot. However, while on the way, he begged his guard to let him go into the toilet, which he did. Although handcuffed, he quietly locked the door and worked at the small window that was not thought large enough for any one to get through, but he got it raised, and squeezed through while the train was at full speed. When he fell upon the ground the fall stunned him, yet before the train could be brought to a standstill he had gained sufficient control of himself to get on his feet and make for the near-by woods. Several shots were fired at him, but all missed their mark, and he kept on until about ten miles from where he made his escape. Working his way in from the woods, he came to the house of an old negro, and persuaded the old man to file the handcuffs from his wrists. He realized that there was only one chance for his life, which was to get across the line at the nearest point to the Northern army. He worked his way through the woods to or near New Bern, begging his food from negroes and sometimes from white homes he could risk approaching. Also he helped himself to anything he could find in the fields, and in such ways managed to continue his journey, traveling mostly through swamps, as the main roads and bridges were guarded. This trip was nearly a hundred miles through a section that was unfamiliar to him, but, as life is more precious than death, he did not think of the hardships.

He finally reached the place he had learned of on his journey. His youthfulness won for him sympathy, even from the mothers, who remembered that they, too, had sons in the service. While they, no doubt, felt mortified by his action and his endeavor to escape to the Yankees, they knew that if a son of theirs was in such a fix they would be grateful to any one who helped him to escape, even if he did have to go to the enemy to avoid being shot at the stake. This feeling

helped the young deserter to find his way to where he found men to take him across the river, where the Yankees would give him a warm welcome.

The day that the half-perished tithe-gatherer met this young deserter, dressed in full officer's uniform, with his deep grey eyes, jet-black hair, and long, well-kept mustache, he could not get his mind off the boy as he had known him. The young man asked how Mr.—— was getting along, and was told that he was perishing, along with others of his friends who were brought there at the same time. The princely looking young officer then said: "Meet me at a certain gate in the morning at 9 o'clock." The time was not forgotten, for at the hour named, the young officer found the tithe-gatherer waiting for him. After a cordial welcome, the young man said: "I have had your name placed on the street commission. I have vouched for your honesty and high character, and you will have freedom to go and return, in and out of the prison, when and as often as you choose. The only promise that I request is that you will be inside of the prison gates each day before sundown." He also promised that he would be given extra food and plenty to eat, and that he would have a chance to make money, which all came true. It was not long before he was carving out all kinds of rings with silver and gold sets in them, which found a ready sale at good prices, and he often made five dollars a day and more. Soon he began to draw extra food of the best. The money he was making enabled him to help his friends who were gradually starving as he was before he ran up with the deserter boy. For years after, his old prison companions would drive a day's journey to visit the one who they vowed had saved their lives from starvation. At such times, they would sit up until the late hours of the night, telling of those sad days, the sad incidents of thousands in prison suffering from hunger and exposure. Still there would be some amusing incidents that happened during the agonies of prison life

that were not funny at the time. Years afterwards, though, they could enjoy a hearty laugh at some incident that was no doubt pathetic at the time it occurred.

Such is the balm administered by time. It is well that all are not like the old Baptist deacon, who sat in the amen corner of his church and was considered a model neighbor as well as a good deacon. His pastor was invited to spend the night with him, and after supper they sat around a big wood fire and discussed various matters. The conversation soon turned to the war, when Deacon C—— began abusing the Yankees for taking his negro property away and for destroying other things. The longer he talked, the madder he got, until his old pastor said: "Oh, Brother C——, you must learn to forgive your enemies and wish them well." Whereupon, the old deacon's rage appeared to become less controllable, and he vehemently exclaimed that he did "wish them well, and in h—, too, where they all belonged."

THE LITTLE PLOW BOY

The little plow boy eleven summers old
Finds it hard to keep his plow straight in the row,
But to do his might he thinks is right,
When he sees to help his country is but right.

The cruel war has changed our plans,
And now the little boy must do the work of a man;
Our food we must raise to command,
Lest we too perish, like they in foreign lands.

The little piggies they too have to be fed,
And when cold and frosty they require beds,
So they will grow large to make our meat,
That all may have plenty of it to eat.

The cows and calves too must have their feed,
If nice milk and butter we are to see;
When we go to our meals hungry and tired,
We expect a plenty or we might become riled.

Then there are millions of others to be fed,
That makes us farm boys willing to do our share,
Lest suffering and misery will come to our ears,
Then we would be ashamed if we stayed too long in our bed.

There too are so many loafing men,
Strolling around when they could get work anywhere,
That it makes it hard on every boy and man,
Especially we, the boys who are doing all we can.

The loafing man, rich or poor,
Should be made to work or to the roads go,
He should not be allowed to consume what others make,
Any more than if he was any other old fake.

CHAPTER III

THE RETURN FROM PRISON

In the course of time people often change their viewpoints as they see blessings following what they once thought to be calamities. During the long months that the tithe-gatherer was in prison he had not heard from the loved ones at home. They, in turn, knew not whether he was dead or alive. President Lincoln's proclamation was issued, which freed the slaves and gave them full citizenship, including participation in government affairs, elections, etc. This is yet thought by many to have been a great mistake. With his wonderful knowledge of human nature, it is strange that he overlooked the fact that the granting of citizenship to such raw recruits would be a calamity, not only to the whites, but eventually to the very ones he wanted to help, as they were totally unprepared to participate in affairs of government.

When brothers became so estranged against brothers as to spend four years violently fighting each other, reason vanishes and the animal comes to the front and reigns, to the perfect delight of his Satanic Majesty. This is the case in every instance where the teaching of the lowly Nazarene is rejected. Though Mr. Lincoln ranks with the "Father of his Country," worthily, yet no man can rule alone, nor see the future clearly enough to dispense with sound advice by those competent to give it. Combined knowledge does not prevent errors being made, but it will considerably reduce the number of them. Consequently, good advice should always be heeded, since "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." This applies to both sides of the family quarrel. It is a great blessing to sinful, blundering humanity that God so often sees fit to overrule evil with good.

After being kept in prison until late fall, he was given his discharge and permitted to go home, changed from the portly,

magnificent specimen of Southern gentleman to the appearance of a forsaken tramp, so much so that he was not recognized by his family until on the doorsteps. His family had given up hopes of ever seeing him again. When returning, his body servant and the other servants were not there to welcome him, as had been the custom in previous years. Only his immediate family were at the old home—his wife, whom he had married at the beginning of the war; his two little girls, a son sixteen years of age (who had arranged to leave for the war), and the baby boy, who was then six years old.

Despondency had come in and possessed the home, and while great joy came when the husband and father returned, yet it was saddening to find everything gone that was once so plentiful and abundant. Farm supplies were about exhausted, owing to the devastation of the war; debts had been made, and there was no friend to help in restoration of team, provisions, etc. With a crippled foot, impaired health, along with fallen ambition, and being unaccustomed to doing manual labor, he did the best that he could in planning for those that had agreed to rent the farm land on shares while he was in prison. The rent that the former slaves (the most trusty ones) gave, carried the family through the winter, and by the sheerest economy enabled them to make another crop the following spring and summer.

When spring opened, though not able to do much, the former tithe-gatherer and late prisoner took the plow, doing the plowing, while Bennie, seven years old, and his sister, nine, did the planting and hoe work; the second sister, eleven, remained at home to help with the cooking, washing, and house work. Bennie's faithful old nurse, who had so closely followed him and saw that his every want was attended to, had been taken far away by her husband, who had been the slave of another planter. This left Bennie without his nurse, who loved him, it seemed, better than her own children. Now at the tender age of seven, it was necessary for him to

go to the field from early breakfast till noon; then, after the midday meal, going back to his work in the field, where he chopped grass and weeds till sundown; then to drive the cows up for the milking to augment the scanty food. His bare feet were often sore and bleeding from rough clods or stone-bruises. After the evening meal, he would climb the stairway, with limbs aching so that it required the greatest effort to pull himself up the steps by the railing, there to roll upon his bed until sleep from exhaustion claimed him until he was called next morning to get the cows from their stalls to be milked, and help to do the numerous other things for which the small boy on the farm is found so handy. After breakfast, the same round over, working in the field from sun to sun, which was at least twelve hours per day; then, after leaving the farm at sundown, one mile from home, he was often busy till late at night feeding the stock. Every other night he went over a mile away from home to feed the hogs, which were kept out on the open range.

With the blessing of Providence, enough corn and bacon was made to take them through another year, with some to spare. There was a good demand for it, but very little money to be had in exchange. Labor was plentiful, but what was raised on the farm could not be used to pay taxes. The debtor came and took all the cash that could be realized from sales. The blight of poverty had fastened its claws of distress so deep into the home that it took all that could be raised the first few years to keep the shadow of despair from taking possession.

DEDICATED TO JULIAN—A REAL UP-TO-DATE FARMER

The Farmer's life looks to others easy and all right,
But his work, when well done, is like that of his wife, always just begun,
For his routine work is from day to day,
In the hot sun, dew, and rain, if he is to find any gain.

Yet it is often we hear the non-producer say,
If I had a farm I would go on it and stay.
If they were there, the towns they would want near,
And about the hot sun, dew and rain they would soon complain.

It takes no dude nor lazy man to successfully run a farm,
For you have to be continually on the go to make any show;
The soil must be fed, if you are to be fed in return;
If you do not feed it, the hunger in your stomach soon will burn.

CHAPTER IV

THE YOUTHFUL FARMER

When Bennie was twelve years of age, the most faithful old slave, Uncle John Brest, had taught Bennie to hold the plow, so that he could plow very well. By the time he was thirteen years old, he took charge of his father's farm, and after that the father saw the farm only twice that year—once when it was being prepared for planting; the second time, when he, with his hired hands, were pulling the fodder. Afterwards, it was seldom that he saw the farm, only to ride over it with some of his friends to show them the crop. He was not able to do manual labor, and some thought that he seldom had a desire to do so, but had the greatest art of having it done by others. He was more at home when entertaining some of his friends, but he claimed that son could manage so much better than he could that he left everything up to him.

About this time, abundant crops were raised on the farm, as the soil was naturally rich, and its fertility was kept up by resting half of it each year, which answered as a fertilizer. It was well that it did, as there was but little money with which to buy anything. As soon as a crop was housed, there were those (known as note traders) waiting to collect the old notes and securities that were given before the war, when the givers never thought that they would become so that they could not pay at any time they were called upon. Besides, there were not many but believed if the slaves were freed, that all debts would be annulled at the same time, and gave but little thought to it; also the note-holders did not want Confederate money, and the matter passed unnoticed. After it was found that they had to pay, many of them took the bankrupt oath, stating that they were not able to pay, and thereby went free. Honesty being one of his principles, he

paid his obligations, securities, etc., notwithstanding that they were made under entirely different conditions than prevailed after the war. The former tithe-gatherer told his creditors that if they insisted upon his paying them at once, they would have to sell him out, as he would not take the advantage of the bankrupt oath, which was intended for protection, but if they would wait on him, as fast as he could make it from his farm he would pay every cent that his debts called for. Knowing that his word was as good as his bond, they did not ask for further security, but waited on the faithfulness of his promise and the fine crops that Bennie and the hired help produced each year.

When the crops were housed, the creditors' wagons and carts were as thick around the barns and smokehouses as at a public mill, each taking his turn to get his portion. Thus the bountiful crops that were raised by the will of a kind Providence were soon divided between the waiting creditors. Bennie's twelve to fourteen hours daily, except on Sunday, with that of his sisters, went to others.

Their stepmother soon became an invalid after her marriage, and was able to do but very little for many years to assist, except to instruct the sisters, who, with Aunt Dafney, did practically all of the work. Aunt Dafney was the old cook who had been with them as a slave years before the war. She lived only a few hundred yards from the home, and her reputation as a cook was known far and near. Her knowledge and art in preparing tasty dishes was a great help to her young pupils.

The process of paying debts continued until Bennie was eighteen years of age, when the last of the old debts were paid, one hundred cents on the dollar, only a few allowing the interest off.

During these years of trials, there was no schooling, except sometimes during the winter there were from two to three months, and this was all the schooling that Bennie got. When he was about grown, his strenuous work for others caused

his health to fail, and the doctor who was called to attend him said that it would be only two or three years at the most before he would be dead, and advised him to get all the sunshine possible. This good advice suited Bennie, not being accustomed to staying in the house any longer than it took him to eat his meals. He made use of his woolen shawl through the hottest of the summer, and while he was too weak to walk one mile to the farm, he would saddle his horse every day the weather would permit and ride over to the farm, where he could ride up and down the rows, following the hands with the hoes, as well as the plow boys. It was said by them that no one ate any idle bread while working for him; yet while others often complained of lack of hands, he could always get all he wanted and with the best service rendered; while they said he worked them, they could always rely on getting their pay to the exact amount promised.

His health began to improve gradually, and by the following year he was able to manage his crop, from the beginning, himself, although not yet able to walk to the farm. Saddling his horse, he would be in the field as near sunrise as possible, riding from place to place, often with his horse jumping ditches, to see that each set of hands were doing their work as it should be done.

The saintly old pastor of the family made his home with them a good portion of the time, as it was a convenient point to the churches he served so long and well. He was a Princeton student, his father being one of the wealthiest men in his state, having owned over five hundred slaves. Bennie's father and the pastor were such close friends that they were called sweethearts.

Although making the record crops in his section, Bennie realized the disadvantage he would have to contend with all his life, due to his lack of education. The pastor had often talked with Bennie about going to school, as he realized, with others, that it was doubtful if he would ever again be able to do manual labor.

After housing his crop, along came a young man with a magic lantern show, who exhibited at the school house in the neighborhood. He stopped at Bennie's house from Saturday night till Monday morning. He offered Bennie one-third of all the money taken in if he would go ahead, secure places to exhibit and advertise the show. The offer seemed good to one whose money had always come so hard, so Bennie decided to accept it, though not much to his father's liking, as he was a little dubious about such methods of making money. While it was a new venture for Bennie, he nevertheless gave it a trial. He was on the road for three months in his private conveyance and in that period of time he did not meet a single acquaintance. All were strangers who had to be met in a way to gain their confidence. He soon became a pretty good judge of people and by meeting them in a courteous, friendly, straight-forward manner, he was treated with courtesy and consideration in return. This experience was the best schooling he ever had.

The following fall he decided that he would start out to do the best he could in becoming better prepared to meet the problems he would have to contend with. An old friend of his father's family began a school about six miles away, in a village Bennie had been accustomed to go to once or twice a month, generally on horse or mule back, carrying a basket of eggs on his arm; later, he went with cart or wagon loaded with corn or other products to exchange for sugar, coffee, flour, kerosene and other things that were not raised on the farm. He was no stranger, especially with the merchants, who always had a kind word for him.

Bennie enrolled in the school started by his old friend and went at his school work like he did his farm work, with his whole heart and mind. Notwithstanding his physical condition, he made rapid progress, and was soon close to his old friend who had spent many days and nights at Bennie's home, where he came every time he was near enough when following his profession, civil engineering. The friendship

between teacher and scholar grew warmer as years went by, until the grand old aristocrat was called to the land from whence no traveler returns.

THE CHURCH

The grand old Church once stood for so much,
Has fallen asleep in its retreat,
From the once noble cause it inspired,
Millions it did save by drawing them nigh.

Since the lines of the world and church is so indistinct,
The grand old church has failed to think,
Its charms seem to be passing away,
Which must give pain to every one not insane.

For it was the old Church that placed the world so high,
Now it is the world that to the Church is so nigh,
Wake up all ye that are asleep,
And get closer to our Saviour's feet.

The old Church was led by men who stood for right,
Now often led by men that might makes right,
So wake up ye be born again,
Or the old time Church will again be slain.

CHAPTER V

THE SCHOOL

Bennie's vision broadened while at the little school in the village on the river bank. Here he made new friends and also renewed acquaintance with older friends of his father's. One of the most prominent of these, a man noted for his enterprise and kindness, seemed to take a great interest in him, mainly, perhaps, because he was the son of his friend. When it was rainy, cold, or snowing, he would await Bennie's coming and insist upon his spending the night with him. Often one of the sweet little girls, not old enough to attend school, would meet him at the gate with a beautiful bouquet of flowers, as a token of her kindness. It began to make Bennie feel that there was something worth living for to have such good friends and their kindness made the down-hearted lad feel much brighter. The chord of friendship never failed; his old friend lived many years after Bennie's father died, and was an active man in business until his death a few years ago. His kind and valuable advice was a great help to Bennie, and it is no wonder that he felt that he had lost a double friend in the death of Captain ————. One of his daughters, who inherited a great portion of her father's kindness, is living in this State, and wearing her mantle with honor.

During the six months school in the village, Bennie made fine headway. The following year he decided to make as large crop as possible, though he was still unable to do manual labor. He hired hands and planted cotton for his money crop, for which he bought some fertilizer. The season was too wet for cotton to do well that year and, consequently, there was very little left after accounts and expenses were paid.

He determined to go to school that winter, although he only had money enough to buy his railroad ticket and pay

one month's board. He left for high school for one session, with less than twenty-five dollars, not knowing the principal nor a single person in the town. When he arrived there with his trunk, on a rainy Sunday morning, he walked up to the preparatory school in the rain and mud, rang the doorbell, asked the porter who answered if Dr. ———— was at home. Being told he was, he asked to see him and when the D.D. came to the door, he introduced himself and was invited into the sitting room, where he was asked to relate his business. Bennie complied, told why he went there to better qualify himself for future life, relating his plain simple story and telling the D.D. if he could take him in his school until the session was over in the spring that he would go home and make a crop and pay him every cent due him. With his keen blue eyes upon him all the time, the D.D. finally said he had a partner and while it was hard to get enough out of the school to run it at the low price they were charging for board and tuition, when everything they had to buy was so high, yet if his partner, Professor C———, would agree to take him for the balance of the term, he would also. He then asked Bennie to go to the Professor's room on the second floor. Reaching there, he was introduced to the big headed, though medium sized man, who looked so serious that Bennie began to have doubts as to his position, but the Doctor stated Bennie's request to the Professor. After asking a few questions, they said they were willing to take him on credit. Then the Doctor said that there was not a vacant room in the College, many having over two beds in each, and added that he did not know how to arrange for his room, as the Professor was the only one who had a room to himself and he didn't like to have anyone with him. The Professor remarked that he would not object to taking Bennie as a room-mate, which was pleasing to all, especially to Bennie.

The friendship began to grow from the first day between the teacher and pupil and they soon became the closest of

friends. This friendship lasted all through the Professor's life, who became one of the most learned lawyers in the State, while Bennie became one of the State's business men and sold goods in the Professor's town for years.

Though handicapped by feeble health, the new pupil got down to earnest work. When he was suffering too much to remain in the class room, he would take his books to his room and study as well as he could while tossing from one side of his bed to the other, trying to find ease. In spite of such a handicap, he kept up with the brightest in his class. Generally, he kept to himself, as he had no money to spend and was obliged to dress very plainly. Dress and money are often the price of becoming popular, and the self-respect of honest and sincere persons is sometimes mistaken for sensitiveness.

Bennie never intruded on those whose actions did not indicate frankness. It was two or three months after he began high school before his principal, the Doctor, had occasion to attend a conference near enough to Bennie's home to meet with some who knew him. Among the number was Bennie's old pastor and dear companion of him and his family. When the Doctor was asked about how Bennie was getting along, he was agreeably surprised to learn the high esteem in which the stranger was held, and told by the old pastor that he had known the boy, now entering into manhood and his family for years and that they were the "salt of the earth." He also asked that the boy be looked after with all the care possible. As soon as the Doctor returned to his school, he sent for Bennie, and delivered a message of love from the grand old nobleman. When he was through telling him the many nice things said about him, he invited him into the sitting room with his family and bade him be welcome and to come in and talk with them anytime he wished, as he would henceforth be considered as one of the family. This privilege was not extended to any of the other sixty-five or seventy boys who were attending the school.

From then on he was introduced to the best girls of the school as well as of the town, and his plain dress never hindered or kept him from being entertained at any special fete of the girls, whether in school, town or surrounding country, where many fine old Colonial mansions were to be found.

When Bennie first landed at school the class of boys that went to school gave him rather a cold reception, but it was not long before he was consulted about almost everything that the societies of the school had anything to do with. When he was given special privileges by the Principal, there were some who manifested more or less jealousy but he paid no attention to it, being always kind to those who would let him. It seemed that several of the more common ones could not endure seeing him specially favored and would speak of him as the young ladies' pet. They finally decided to get even with him by one of their bullies insulting him without provocation. This bully was said to be a champion and considered to be some "scrapper." He was to give Bennie a thrashing for the benefit of the school gossips, but when the insult came, before he had time to think, he was hurled to the floor, with Bennie on top of him knocking him in the face until he called for help. Some of his crowd rushed to help him but they were pushed back by Bennie's friends; before the bully was allowed to get up, he was made to beg pardon and admit that he was in the wrong.

Apparently, this ended the matter, at least for the time being. A short time afterwards, a reception was held on Friday night, after the Debating Society exercises were over. One big fellow, who came from another town, tried to get some of the girls to be his partner in some of the games that were played. They all refused, as it had gotten out in the college that his large touring trunk was filled with many articles that boys did not wear. As he had been a clerk in a large department store, they could not understand why he should buy things that he had no use for. Being sore, he had to take his spite out on someone for snubs from the girls,

so when he went back to the auditorium with the boys, he insisted that it was the pet who was the cause of the treatment he had received. Looking straight at Bennie, he said that he could whip any s— b— who was to blame for it. He was asked why he looked so straight at Bennie and answered that he was the cause of it. When told that he knew nothing about his being snubbed and cared less, he told Bennie that he was a l——. By the time the word was out of his mouth, he was knocked in the face against the wall and held by the throat and kicked faster than a mule could kick with a hornet's nest tied to his tail. In a few minutes, he cried out that he was done and begged pardon, but when he was freed, he sat down and talked himself into another mad fit; he then pulled out his knife and said he did not have a fair show and would not stand for it. The professor happened to be in the hall and saw it all, and he was asked if he thought it fairly done; he and also the boys said that it was. However, the big bully had aroused Bennie's Scotch fire and he proposed that they take themselves into the adjoining room and settle the matter with knives or in any other way the other might suggest, but the big bully, as he was called, decided that he was ready to stop it all, and they were friends but never chums.

In the meantime the first fighter had gathered up five of his chums, and waylaid Bennie and all jumped on him, to give him what they said would be a plenty; if one could not do it alone, they could do it together. They caught him half-way between the town and the school. As soon as they were near enough, they assailed him, two at a time. It was not long before he had the first two running in different directions and as the other three started in, he took a piece of timber and went for them. Before they knew what had happened, they were fleeing at full speed, with Bennie behind doing his best to get near enough to use his piece of timber. Those who witnessed the battle said that it was a complete victory.

When the principal returned on Monday, he felt it such an outrage that he had a warrant served on each one of them. When the trial came off, they were all penitent and begged so hard to be let off that the Justice of the Peace said he would leave it with Bennie, as to their punishment. Bennie told them that if he had had a gun, he would have shot them the same as he would have shot sheep-killing dogs, but since they had begged pardon and showed penitence, he would forgive them. The principal dismissed from school the one who was to blame for the occurrence. Afterwards, there was nothing but the best of feeling in the school, and when the spring term closed, all went home to be friends through life.

When Bennie reached home, the farm was rented out, that is, all the best land. He was in debt for most of his schooling, for he received very little from home. He set about to tend a small crop of corn. It was the last week in May when he started to work; after getting ground ready to plow, he took a team and did the plowing, while he got some of the old helpers to plant and hoe the crop. The corn grew rapidly and soon hid the horse and plowman. It proved too much for his strength, and he became too ill to finish the plow work and hired Uncle John Brest to lay the crop by, which was as fine or better than any on the farm. There was more than enough of the corn at one dollar twenty-five cents per bushel to pay all Bennie's school debt.

As soon as he rested up, and got stronger, he hired some of the farm hands to help him cut a raft of timber, and while it was only common timber, it brought a fancy price, due to the fact that he was on tidewater and was able to get it to market at a time when the rivers were too low higher up for the timber cutters to float their rafts. The mills men had vessels to load, many on demurrage, and were so anxious for timber that they flocked to the raft and paid twice what they ordinarily would have paid for it. This was a pleasant

surprise for Bennie, as it enabled him to pay all his expenses including doctor bills and there was enough left to buy his clothes and pay the expenses of the fall term of school without touching the balance of his corn, which was more than sufficient to pay for the spring term.

He was there on time when the next session opened, ready and anxious to take up his school work again, though often sick enough to be in bed. However, under the kindly care of the old doctor of the village, he wrestled with his pains and studies and kept to the front of his class always. Great kindness was shown him by the school and the people of the village, the sons of noble old families often bringing him beautiful bouquets from some member of the family; some of them were of the family of Bennie's old pastor. This grand old patriot often said that he loved Bennie and his family as well as he did his own, as they seemed one family to him. His first pastorate was before the beginning of the Civil War, at the old church, and he was its pastor for twenty-eight years. Bennie's father was the church clerk, so no two men knew each other better, or had greater affection for each other.

At the close of the session, Bennie had finished and passed with credit to himself and the school on all his work and was prepared to enter Wake Forest in the following fall. However, the close confinement and hard work had been a serious tax on him physically, which made necessary frequent attentions from old Dr. H———, who in his kindness saw Bennie's teacher and begged him to persuade Bennie to abandon the idea of further pursuing his college work, as he would be dead in less than two years if he continued to confine himself in a school room. The Professor had come to the same conclusion but refrained from speaking about it as he knew the disappointment it would cause him, after he had finished up all his work and was waiting for the commencement.

He had been elected by the Debating Society to be its orator, but being one of the principal speakers in the contest before the society with the subject: "Was the Character of Napoleon Bonaparte Worthy of Admiration?" and he having the affirmative, and there being an ambitious young man in school who was only taking a law course, who was anxious to be the orator of the day, Bennie refused to accept the place and worked for the law student to be elected, which he was, to his great pleasure. While all expected a big time at the commencement, none were disappointed, and the hall was packed. After the oration by the orator of the school (which was very creditable), the question was left to the audience as to which side made the best presentation of their subject in the debate of the Literary Society. When the vote was taken, the affirmative had nine votes to one of the negative, although the affirmative was represented by two farm boys and the negative by a young lawyer and a business man of the town.

Bennie's teacher had not spoken to him about the talk the old doctor had with him about advising him, not that he did not agree with the old doctor, but hated to make him feel sad, while everyone was feeling so happy over the expectation of a good time at commencement, but when he began speaking of leaving, the sympathetic professor told him that he wanted to have a talk with him, in his office. When they went up and were seated, he began by telling him that he knew that his bad health would never allow him to finish his course through college, and related what the old doctor had told him, and added that he had made up a list of books with which he could continue his education, as he already had the foundation well laid, and if his health would permit him to finish college, he then would not be educated, as it only served to lay a foundation, and he would soon learn that a sheep-skin was no true sign of an education, as one to be educated in the true sense had to continue his

study all the time, as there were always new problems that continued to come up that needed one's attention as much as any lesson that the student had previously studied. He said that the reason so many fail who receive their diplomas was that they failed to keep on with their work.

While he was presenting Bennie with his list of books, and advising him not to jeopardize his health at the risk of his life, Bennie's eyes were too dim to see anything except trying to keep the tears wiped away that were running down his cheeks. His train was near due but he was not in any mood to tell his friends good-bye as he had promised, and hurrying through the building trying to appear as if he had to hustle to catch a train and telling those who blocked the aisles and porch, he put on all the courage that he could, and went through an unnatural process hurrying to the depot, there to purchase his ticket, leaving his friends in the town no doubt thinking strange of him for not keeping his promise.

Though against his will, he decided to take the good advice that had been given him. Arriving home, he began to plan anew, as his previous plans were all upset. A phrenologist, in reading his head, had told him that his strongest talent would be as a contender before the bar, that he would pitch his contention on high grounds, and would not knowingly defend a willful wrongdoer, and further said that he would have a hard road to travel through life, as his ideas were at least a quarter of a century ahead of the ordinary man, and while he would always have opposition, his opponents would in the end be following him. He also said that he would succeed as a farmer and stock raiser or in commercial business or in almost any calling that required thought and energy.

THE OLD HORSE

The kind old horse that has so long carried our load
Has become so feeble that he can no longer go.
Now to keep him, just to see him eat,
Makes our selfish bones think it is him we should let others eat.

What are we to do with this noble old sire?
To eat him is not an honest man's desire,
But feed to many is getting so high
Until we fear the time for eating him is drawing nigh.

So what to do with our noble old horse
Is a problem we have not yet solved,
But if the war lords keep telling us what to eat
We soon may expect them to say old horse meat.

CHAPTER VI

THE PURCHASE OF THE FARM

For the time being, Bennie decided to take up farming, as it would give him sunshine and fresh air as well as needed exercise. He started his crop the last of May, and with the boys he hired, made a good crop.

There was a large farm advertised for sale adjoining his father's and the small farm given him by his father. This farm for sale had belonged to Bennie's uncle, who had died in camp at Fort Fisher during the war, and had been in the hands of an administrator for fourteen years. Bennie's father allowed the largest creditor, rather than himself, to settle the estate. This farm after the slaves were freed, was all there was left out of a large estate. His brother found that another had deeds for a great portion of the land, one who had remained at home during the war, but as the older brother did not learn to say "no" to his friends when they wanted him to sign their notes as security, when payday came after the war, they found that every note that he had signed had been judgmented against his estate, and the administrator had bought them up and held them against the estate, (in his wife's name), and at the same time had not credited any of the rent he had collected on the farm. Bennie, knowing that his father had gotten nothing from the estate, tried to get him to bring action and have the administrator removed for cause, but no one objected to lawsuits any more than he did, and said they had taken all but this farm, so let him have that. But Bennie did not give up, and finally got his father, who was not able to look after business, to sell him his interest in the estate. When this was done, at a mere gift, he then brought suit to remove the administrator, who had many thousands of dollars against it in judgments, which was first to be paid and it being doubtful if they could

be upset; but after several trips, and contending nearly all one night with the administrator, this was accomplished. Bennie thought that these judgments were unjust, as almost all were security money for his uncle's friends, given during the war, that could have been paid, but no one thought anything of them, or they did not want the currency in circulation, and nearly every one thought that if the war was lost, all the old debts would be canceled, along with slavery. Knowing that he was made a slave by having to pay the unjust judgments that were held against his father, he was determined to save some of the wreckage of his uncle's once big estate, by not paying any more than was lawful that was held by the administrator, and when he had wrested the remainder of the estate, which only consisted of the farm of about three hundred acres — one hundred and twenty-five acres cleared and tended every year for fourteen years, with no improvements put on by the administrator—so eager was he to get all that he could, that when Bennie came in possession of it there was not much hope of making anything on it until it was drained and brought back to its fertility; and the court, in turning it over to him, appointed him commissioner, which allowed him the right to bid at public auction the same as any one else. The first year when under his charge, he advertised, according to law, that it would be rented on a certain day to the highest bidder; when the time came, Bennie's bid was the highest, and he rented the farm for that year. After cleaning out the ditches, cutting down the hedges, etc., he succeeded in making only a fair crop. The next year he again rented the farm at the highest bid, and kept on improving it, until the improvements could be seen, and when the note and judgment owner saw that it was finally out of his possession, and while his judgments would come first, he made Bennie an offer to sell his judgments, which were found to be in his wife's name, to him or any one else, for a certain amount of cash. Bennie knew that he did not have anything like a fourth enough money to pay for

them, but he went to see his attorney for his advice. When he stated the case, he told Bennie to accept the offer, but Bennie told him that he had no way to raise the money, that he did not want to mortgage the little farm that his father had given him, even if he could get enough on it to pay the judgments, which he had no idea he could. After a few minutes of silence, his attorney, who had known him from boyhood, and also his father, said to him that he had two sisters who had recently come into possession of some money, and believed that they would lend him the necessary amount to close the trade. He added that he would see them and let him know at once, which he did, and notified Bennie that it was all right. A date was fixed to meet for the transfer, and when the judgments were all transferred, he said to Bennie that he would then get an order from court to sell the land, and have the order made so that he could have the right to bid on the land the same as any one else, if he so decided. The order was obtained from the court, and due notices were given, in the papers and at other public places, according to law, when and where the sale would take place. On the day of sale, lots of people were present—many who were able to pay any reasonable price for it—and when Bennie saw them coming from so far to bid on the farm which had once been one of the best in the county, he decided that they would very likely outbid him. Before the hour of the sale, several of the prospective bidders called Bennie's father to one side and said to him that they had come to buy the farm, but if he wanted it, as it had been his brother's and adjoined his own land, he ought to have the refusal, and they would not bid against him if he was going to bid on it. The father, who was broken in spirit, as well as an invalid, told his old friends that he was not able to buy it, but that his son was expecting to bid on it, and he would be glad to see him own it, as he had had to pay his old war judgments, the same as this farm was being sold for. His friends, who had come expecting to buy it said that they would not run it up on his

son, as they thought that he ought to have the chance to buy it. In a few minutes the sale was on, with the old friends of his father's starting off the bids; then others joined in who had no thought of Bennie but to get the farm, if they could. The latter, however, soon dropped out when the first bidders ceased to bid. When the auctioneer gave notice of the last bid, Bennie signaled his bidder to raise it, which he did. No one raised it after that, and the property was knocked down to Bennie's agent, and the court confirmed the sale.

This was in late winter, and Bennie immediately began preparation for his crops, buying more teams, but not discarding his plow oxen and his blind horse, that were his best friends on the farm. He made better crops each year, and as prices kept up fairly well, it enabled him to begin paying some each year on his notes. In the meantime, when his crops were laid by, he would begin cutting telegraph poles, timber, shingles, etc., in order to help pay the debt on the farm, which was knocked down for less than Bennie had paid for the judgments. He continued to improve it until, as the older ones told him, it began to look like it did when there were plenty of slaves to work it. He was busy six days in the week, as a rule, from sunrise to dark, most of the time. After supper he would often take his horse and ride several miles, getting hands for a rush of work.

His sisters had both married and moved away, and it was lonesome at the old home with only his parents and himself. However, he did not suffer for company so much, as there were lots of young people in and out. Mindful of the advice of his old friend and teacher, he spent as much time as possible with his books. Often he would go to his room, light his lamp, and enjoy the company of the finest companions the world has produced.

About the time he reached his majority, he was appointed as a justice of the peace for his township, a position he did not want, but, being persuaded to serve, decided to do so. Soon every little frivolous thing that happened would be

brought to him for adjustment. If he could not persuade them to settle the matter, he would cite them for a hearing, and when both sides were heard, he could then see who was in the wrong, which was often both. He would then try to show them that they were foolish in disagreeing over matters that they should be ashamed of, and, if possible, get them to agree on a settlement, when he would dismiss the case, without charge or cost. If they refused to agree, he followed the rule of his father, who was a magistrate for years, and sent them to another magistrate, who would eagerly try the case and never forget to collect his fees. It mattered not which one lost the case, the cost had to come; if not by the loser, then by the winner, if he was able to pay it.

Helping the cow with her adopted calf, Little Bell,
Seeing that she gets plenty to eat of the tenderest grass,
Is a duty we must perform, whether we feel right or wrong.
The table, as the calf, must be supplied, or the cook becomes riled.

The cook often claims the calf gets too much milk,
When the puny calls for things they have not to eat.
To supply the calf and those who meat they cannot eat,
Keeps the old cow busy finding things suitable to eat.

Little Bell, the orphan, had a mother refined,
Being of noble birth, also excelled in intrinsic worth,
We expect in Little Bell the trait of her ancestors to tell,
Like man, noble blood in beast will for generations dwell.

The little boys once had time the cows to watch,
Now have more of other things than they can do,
Which increases the burden upon those who are doing their best,
As the cruel war gives neither mind or body any time to rest.

Bennie threw consternation into one of these courts one day, when old Uncle Harry, one of his father's old slaves, came to him and told him that he had bought a horse from one of the merchants and had paid the purchase price agreed upon, and that the merchant had gotten out some kind of papers, sent to his home and took the horse away and deliv-

ered him back to the man the old slave had bought him from. Bennie asked the old man if he had receipts for all the money that he had paid on the horse; he replied that he did, but did not have them with him then, as they were at his home, and the trial was set for 2:30 that afternoon. As a rule, Bennie never went around a court unless he had special business there, but he told the old slave that he would be on hand to see what they purposed to do, and he sent the old man after his receipts. He knew that the justice of the peace was as putty in the hands of his friends, and he wanted to prevent an injustice being done to the old slave, who begged him to please keep them from taking his horse away. He met him at the place of trial at 2 o'clock, and, on looking through his receipts, found that he had paid what he said he agreed to pay for the horse. When the trial was called, the justice of the peace stated the nature of the case. Bennie then asked the court how much the defendant was to pay for the horse; the answer corroborated with the statement of the old slave. After asking a few more questions that seemed to upset the plaintiff, as well as the justice of the peace, Bennie was asked if he had license to practice law before the court, they knowing very well that he did not. He told them he didn't, but had come there to assist the helpless old man as best he could. After that, every question asked was treated as though it was none of his business, but it threw a surprise into the court when he produced the receipts, as there was no denying them. There was a claim of a balance due on a store account, but the horse had been paid for, as the old slave was shrewd enough to have each payment marked paid on the horse, acting on the advice Bennie had given him when he had rented him shingle timber in order to get out shingles to pay for the horse. Even this, however, did not deter the court from giving judgment against the old slave, which carried the horse back to its orginal owner. When this was done, Bennie asked for an appeal to the higher court for the old negro, and said that he would stand his bond. When

court adjourned, both returned to their homes, the latter without his horse. In a few days, realizing what they would have to face in a higher court, they sent for the old slave to come get his horse, which he lost no time in doing, and the matter ended there.

The kind feeling that was held by the slave owners, with few exceptions, was always one of sympathy, and it exists today. Many of the younger generation who were born since slavery and did not have the dicipline of the old slave when being raised and who were allowed to run at large, work or play, are the ones you will always find in trouble. As a rule, the old slave is a law-abiding citizen, and is liked by those who know him. It always worried Bennie to wonder what would become of the younger race of negroes, they being so different from the white race. A more antagonistic spirit seems to be developing between the races which is likely to lead to serious consequences. Nothing but the high hand of Providence can settle this vexed question.

Cunning politicians have ridden into office on the negro's back, first, when he was allowed to vote, by controlling the election, and the ballot boxes and counting the votes for themselves, and their party. Then, since he has been disfranchised, they still ride into office on him, claiming the negro will vote themselves in power, and rule the white people if the whites do not continue to vote their ticket. Notwithstanding that, there are about four to five white votes to every negro vote, and all thinking people know that there is no danger of negro rule. Yet they, with the papers that they control, have been so foul in their denunciation and misrepresentation, heaping all manner of abuse, even ostracizing, when they can, those who would dare to vote any other than their party ticket, often classing those who dare to vote their convictions as white negroes. Of course the non-thinkers generally vote against themselves instead of voting for men and measures that would be to their interest. While party is all well to work through to accomplish worthy pur-

poses, yet parties, when they get so foul for the reason of selfish interests controlling them, ought to be rebuked by voting them out, until party becomes honest representatives of the people. The following will better describe the non-thinking man:

There is a man too lazy to think for himself
And always he leaves it to others.
And when things go wrong he whoops and he whines
And places the blame on his brothers.

And there's another—may God save the race—
Whose mind has become a pure blank,
By reason of letting his brain cells go dry,
And the weed of his ignorance grow rank.

The all-wise Creator, who allowed the negro to be brought here, no doubt to civilize and Christianize him, will eventually take him back to his former land to help civilize and Christianize the "dark continent." When this is brought to pass, it is to be hoped that the great majority of the white race will not be disfranchised at the dictates of the special interests, in order that it will not cost them so much worry and money to keep in control. When the negroes go back to their home, may their shadows cease to fall on the whites, who have been so long trimmed by common self-seeking office hunters.

THE SPECIAL INTERESTS PAPER

FOR THE TOWNS, CITIES AND STATES THAT LET SPECIAL INTERESTS DOMINATE

The Government now by the Press is run,
Often by the politician who just starts out to have some fun,
But as soon as the power of the paper is won
The traps and snares for them has just begun.

Some by the masses and their country stand
While many follow after Press tootering bands,
Ready to sell themselves and country complete,
For money, influence, or any old thing that looks to them sweet.

It is sad that the Press to the people that once stood so high,
Is honey-combed by treachery and to traitors so nigh,
All because the money trust over them controls,
And only let the editors tell the people what they want them to know.

See the cities where special interests control,
They have their papers and certain politicians they know.
If one is honest and the people he would serve,
These same papers will soon have him on his nerve.

The special interests papers select their man
And soon commence to praise him to beat the band.
The masses soon chime in to help elect this popular man,
When they awake to where they stand, they find they are already canned.

When in the halls of legislation their popular man they land,
These same papers sing his praise to every man,
At the same time around their popular man they stand,
Until he gets for them about everything in our broad land.

See the propagandists from foreign lands,
Who through greed have sunk their ship, have ours on drifting sand,
Now trying to persuade us to join their treacherous game
By destroying truth, justice, and fame, for morbid gain.

CHAPTER VII

BUSINESS EXPERIENCES IN THE CITY

In the fall of the fourth year after Bennie had bought his farm, and was about ready to begin gathering, one evening, about sundown, a stranger drove up to his home. He introduced himself and stated that he had been directed to come there as a good place to spend the night and asked if he could stay. As Bennie had never seen a stranger turned away, nor ever charged for being taken care of, the stranger was told that he might stay all night. On leaving next morning, he inquired the way to a certain place in the adjoining county, which was about twenty miles distant. Bennie told him that he was going by the same place to a point beyond, and the stranger was delighted to know that he would have a guide. Bennie told him that he had to settle with his hands and would then be ready to go. By nine o'clock they were on their journey; when a half-mile from home Bennie proposed that they go through his field, as it would save them three miles in distance. When they were in the middle of the farm, among the crops, Mr. W—— asked whose farm it was; on being told, he exclaimed that if he had a farm like this one, he would be perfectly happy. Bennie had learned enough from him to know that he was the head manager of a big business in a nearby city, and that he had a big office force under him, and he told him that he was thinking of going to the city as soon as he could gather his crop to remain at least until the first of March, when he would start his crop for another year, and asked Mr. W——— if he didn't have a place in his office that he could give him, which very much surprised him. He wanted to know why he wanted to go anywhere, when he had such a farm as that. Bennie replied that he wanted to see more of the world and get more experience, that there was no one

at home except his parents and the servant and that he would like to spend a few months in the city, as a change. Mr. W——— could hardly believe that he was in earnest, but when he found that he was sincere, he told him that he had only one vacant place in his office and that was as bookkeeper, which was being filled temporarily by one of the regular clerks. Bennie told him that he had never kept books, except with his farm hands, but that he would be glad to take the place, if he would give it to him, after he finished harvesting. Mr. W——— said that he would hold the place open three weeks. Bennie thanked him and asked how much it paid and was told that it paid nine dollars per week. Bennie then inquired if that would pay his board and Mr. W——— assured him that it would, as he was getting good board and room for four dollars and fifty cents per week.

On the day that Bennie told Mr. W——— he would be there, he was on hand. In the afternoon, about four-thirty, he found the office, walked in with grip in hand, and asked one of the clerks if Mr. W——— was in. He answered, "Yes, back in the private office." Bennie felt lost and not very buoyant, especially seeing the clerks watching him and no doubt wondering what the gawky countryman wanted. On entering the office, he spoke to the manager, addressing him as Mr. W———. He looked up at Bennie and said, "I must have seen your face somewhere before, but cannot locate you." Bennie asked if he didn't remember being at a certain place and of promising him a job as bookkeeper. Whereupon he got out of his chair, and said that he had no idea that he would ever come off that farm. In answer to Bennie's inquiry about the place promised, he told him that a substitute was handling the work and that he could have it if he wanted it. Bennie thanked him, adding that he was green at the business and would like for him to help him get started. He agreed to do this, saying that as the ledger was ruled for different entries in different columns, he could

soon catch on. He then asked Bennie to have a seat and as soon as the office force left, he would start him off on the books. At six o'clock everyone was hustling for their coats, hats, etc., and the boss and new bookkeeper were left alone, and the first lesson in bookkeeping began. It was the first set of such books Bennie had ever looked into, but he learned more in that short hour than he ever learned in so short a time, before or since, because he knew that his job depended on remembering all that was being told.

As Bennie and his new boss were leaving the office, he asked him if he knew of a good place where he could get board. Mr. W——— replied that he had a nice place and that it might be possible for him to get board at the same place, although they were pretty well crowded, but to bring his valise along and he would do the best he could for him. On reaching the house, about four blocks distant, he called for the landlady and after introducing his new bookkeeper, asked if she could take him as a boarder. She answered that she would gladly do so, but every room in the building was occupied, still she could give him table board if he could get a room nearby. She also told Mr. W——— that he had one of the largest rooms in the house but that he objected to anyone else having a bed in it with him. Mr. W——— said that was true, but he would make an exception of this case and told the landlady if she would put a bed in the room for his new friend, he would have no objection. She said that she would put one while they were eating supper, as she had some ready in the house. The room was nice and comfortable, and a warm friendship between the two began, one a Yankee, who was considered by the rest of the boarders as being a selfish person who cared for no one but himself, which was all wrong, as they had held off, expecting him to do all the advancing.

The next morning they were at the office by eight o'clock. The boss told the substitute bookkeeper that he had gotten

this young man to take the books, and that he would take up the work that he was doing before he took the books, and asked him to assist the new man whenever he needed help. Bennie, having watched so closely all that he was shown the night before, did not need assistance; besides, he thought he could see a spirit of jealousy among the older clerks and for this reason he was determined to get along without calling on them. The work became easier until he had no trouble with it; he remained at the office each day until he had completed the work for that day.

As the boss and new bookkeeper learned more of each other, quite a change began to come over the cold Yankee—as he was called by the boarding-house family The new roomer was soon on good terms with all in the house and it was quite an agreeable family.

It was in November when Bennie began his first and only work for another, except the three months he spent in the magic lantern business. One day the manager came out of his office and said to the bookkeeper: "I want you to go with the driver out to a certain street and number and bring in a machine that the party refuses to pay for." He further said that those that he had instructed to get the machine had failed to do so. The bookkeeper looked up at him and said: "Mr. W———, I want you to discharge me." "Why do you say that?" the manager asked. Bennie replied that he did not want to go with the wagoner to get the machine, as he was offered more than three times the salary he was getting to become an agent for the company, but had declined it rather than haul sewing machines around for sale, though he would not blame Mr. W——— if he discharged him. The manager did not say anything but Bennie would not have been surprised that night had he been told that his services were no longer needed. The incident was never mentioned again after that, and things went on in fine shape.

He would often see his father's old friend, Captain ———, who lived at the village on the river bank and owned and

ran a steamboat regularly from his home to the city, carrying passengers and freight. With an interest always manifested in him, he would give him advice as if he were his own child. One day he said to Bennie: "There is one of the best openings in this city for an honest commission man, to handle country produce and other things that are shipped here, and I have been thinking it would be the very thing for you, and I want you to think about it, and if you will go into it, I can throw into your hands lots of produce to sell, as everybody who knows you has confidence in you and there will be no doubt that you will succeed from the beginning. Think it over and let me know." This was quite a surprise to Bennie, as he fully intended going back to the farm the first of March, but he then began to think over the advice from the captain whom he knew could be of great help to him, should he decide to embark in the new business. After two or three weeks he saw Captain ——— again, who inquired what he had decided upon. Bennie told him he was seriously thinking of going into it, at the beginning of the year. His old friend put his hand on his shoulder, saying: "I am glad to hear it, and I will begin to tell the people about it, so they can know to whom to ship." After going back to his place of business he began to think it was his duty to notify his boss of the decision, but concluded to wait until all the clerks left at six o'clock, when they would be alone in the office. Just before they left for their boarding house, he mustered up courage enough and told him of his intentions, so that he might have time to secure another bookkeeper. After hearing his plans, the manager told him that it would never do, for he had already recommended him to the main office of the factory for appointment as manager at a thriving town near the size of the city where he was, at a salary of one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month and a commission of fifteen per cent on all sales that were made by the nine to eleven salesmen that worked

from that office. The commission, he added, would be at least as much as the salary, and that he could depend on the appointment.

This was another surprise to Bennie, who had no thought of such promotion, but he had told the Captain that he would embark in the new business at the first of the year. He was sorely troubled, as he looked upon one as a certainty, the other to be tried out. After thinking a bit, he asked the manager: "Suppose I should accept the position you say I can have and should make good, would they later send me somewhere else?" Mr. W——— replied that as he grew in the business, they would keep transferring him to larger cities, always with increased salary, that in five years he might be in a city of several hundred thousand people, drawing anywhere from five to ten thousand dollars a year salary, as the salary always followed the worth of the manager to the company. While this was a flattering offer, and one to be proud of, Bennie asked that he be given a week to think it over. He pondered it continually, but when his mind returned to his father, who was old and almost helpless, so far as looking after business was concerned, and of his mother, who was far from strong, he felt that his first duty was to look after them. He could not bear the idea of being so far from them that he could not run up to see them two or three times a month, nor hear from them every few days by those who came to the city from the neighborhood, which gave him the opportunity of sending them any little thing that he thought they might enjoy.

Taking everything into consideration, Bennie fully made up his mind that he could not accept the offer, much as he appreciated it, so when the week was out that he had asked for in which to think the matter over, he told his friend that he had decided to remain near home, to be near his helpless father. A look of more than sadness came over the manager's face, who had become much attached to him. He told Bennie that he was greatly disappointed, as his appoint-

ment had come in last night's mail. However, he wished him well in his new undertaking and added that he did not doubt that he would do well. Bennie was only in the office about one week longer; when the time came to say good-bye, it was sad for the manager and himself.

After spending two weeks at home with his parents, arranging with his tenants to work the farm, he went back to the city, to occupy the building he had rented to conduct his new business in. It was only a few days after his advertisement appeared in the paper before produce of every kind began to pour in. The Captain brought in big consignments which, with the other shipments, made more than he could attend to alone and he had to hire help.

A big man, in heart as well as in stature, had moved near Bennie's home a few years before he went to the city. This man ran four large stores and seemed to take a liking to Bennie, and began to ship him not only all of his country produce, but lighters loaded with shingles, often a hundred and fifty thousand shingles at a time, to be sold. That was the beginning of giving him the control of the shingle market in the city as long as he did business.

When he embarked in his new undertaking, his old friend, the Captain, had on his boat a young boy, as his mate, near Bennie's own age. After a few years, he bought a boat and ran up to the head of navigation, making two trips a week. Captain B——— saw that Bennie got all that he could get from his run. When the business grew so far beyond expectation, and so many orders were sent to him to buy for people who shipped, and often for the people who had no produce to ship but would send their order and money for him to buy for them, he soon saw the need of a stock of goods and a larger store in which to fill his orders more conveniently. He then secured a larger building, but when he began to count up the cost of the stock needed, he saw that his funds were lacking. One of the large merchants of the city, Mr. H——, who filled Bennie's orders, and waited on him for

the pay while he was struggling on the farm, went to him and proposed to fill his store up with anything he wanted. It was agreed upon to give him part of his order, and when the goods all came in, he saw that Mr. H——— had sent a good many things that were not put down on his memorandum. When he went to see about it, he was told that they were not to be paid for until they were sold, and if any could not be sold, they could be returned. That was the beginning of the annoyance of the drummers, and while he never bothered to give any statement to the commercial agents, he was put down as number one for all that he bought, but he soon learned that buying right was half sold to start with, and while he was always busy, he was never too busy to give a drummer a few minutes to see his goods, and get his prices, either at the moment he came in or a little later. He would take anything offered at attractive prices, if he saw that he could sell it, and pass on the things he did not need. He soon became known by the drummers and brokers as a close buyer, never appearing anxious to buy, as he let the drummer have that part of the job. Often when the salesman would cut to his limit from his importers, as Bennie soon found that he could buy as cheap as the jobber, he would make him an offer to submit, sometimes by letter or wire if the goods were needed at once, and often he got them at his offer. In this way he could meet prices of any of the large jobbers that his men or brokers, whom he had in most all towns, would come into competition with.

For the first three or four years he both retailed and wholesaled. While in the retail business, he captured most of the vessel trade that came to the city. As the principal ship-broker's office was next door to his, he managed to get on the good side of the old gentleman and his sons, and soon had their customers' trade, as there was always a vessel in port that had not finished loading. The captains would tell their brother captains where was the best place to buy their

supplies. There is no attachment stronger than seamen hold for each other. Their own perils give them sympathy for their brothers of the same calling.

About this time he was having all the trade that he and his help could well look after, and had partly filled orders one day for eight or nine vessels that were in port. Being in February and a dry stormy day, the mischievous office boy of the ship-broker's went out behind the building to shoot off a cannon that he had made. He had bought a half pound of powder and poured it into the cannon; then packing his wadding, he applied the torch but the wind blew it out. He then got a coal and put his mouth near enough to blow it and ignite the powder. When the powder caught, the cannon exploded, knocking the boy down, singeing his hair and eyebrows off, and leaving him senseless. The fire ignited the heaps of paper, and, fanned by a heavy wind, the ship-broker's office was soon afire and the flames spread rapidly to Bennie's store. As it was Saturday, Bennie had gone up to his boarding house for an early supper. While at the table, he heard the fire bell ringing, but paid no attention to it, until someone came in and said that the fire was near his store. As soon as he heard that, he was up from the table and was running to the fire. Just before he got there, he met an old negro running with a box of tobacco under each arm. Bennie knew him, as he had often given him small jobs around the store, and he called out: "Johnson, what are you doing with that tobacco?" "Oh, Mr. Bennie, your store is on fire!" "Well, what are you doing with that tobacco?" he asked. "Nothing, only I am going to save it for you," was the answer. He afterwards claimed that he carried it back, which was doubtful, as it was never seen by anyone at the store.

Bennie's hopes were cut down as he remembered that he had only one thousand dollars insurance on his entire stock of goods, which was taken out when he first went into business, as he thought it was useless to pay out money for

insurance on a building that had been standing twenty-five years, but too late he saw his mistake. The news was flashed all over the country about the fire and the amount of insurance.

Bennie had agreed to take in an old man who claimed that he would put in the business many thousand dollars. After he had been there two months he had only put in three hundred dollars; when Bennie told him to put in the amount agreed upon, he said, "Why man, what do we need it for? We are buying all the goods we need and paying for them as the bills become due." Bennie told him that he wanted the money so that they could pay cash, to get the discount, and if he wanted a partnership with him, he must put up the money.

The first thing that Bennie did was to go over his books, to see how much he owed, and how much was owing him and find out the amount of his bank account, then he began to figure the percentage his total resources would allow him to pay on the bills of his creditors. When the old would-be partner saw Bennie's purpose, he began to contend, saying the thing to do was to take what money he received for insurance and the amount in the bank and divide it among themselves and let the creditors take what accounts there were for what they owed them, as all of it would pay only a small per cent to the creditors. Bennie told him that when he went to supper that night of the fire there were fifty or sixty dollars in the drawer, not put in the safe but left for change, besides a good deal in paper, but the old man claimed that he was too excited to take it out, but there was no silver found when they cleared the debris away. Also he said that he had more than thousands in the business when he had only put three hundred dollars in, and had drawn all of that out except about seventy-five dollars and he could have that, and every dollar of the balance was going to the creditors. Then the old man insisted on each taking what they had first put in and the five hundred each, exemption. Bennie

refused, saying that they did not have a cent in the business until the debts were paid. The old man objected to this and said that he would stop the insurance, as he had no right to give a check on the bank, but the insurance agent was seen, who promised that the insurance would be paid him, as it was in his name.

In a few days the percentage of resources on the liabilities was worked out. About that time the northern creditors began to come in and after having a conference and finding out how much was left, and hearing Bennie's proposition to pay them proportionately, as far as the money would go, his largest creditor inquired: "What are you thinking of doing now?" Bennie replied that he would soon get a job somewhere, and pay his creditors all he made, except enough for his board and a few clothes. This creditor then said to him: "Before you do anything, I want to have a talk with you." Bennie thought that he was going to give him a job, and he asked him if he could meet him at a certain hotel at two o'clock. He was told "yes" and when the time arrived, so had Bennie. After being offered a cigar, he was asked to sit down and "let's talk business." The first question asked was: "Would you go back into business if you were able?" Bennie answered "Yes." His creditor then said: "I have been in communication with my partner, and we have agreed to put you back into business, you giving us your plain notes for what you owe us. We will sell you all the goods that you want and assist you to buy from any jobber or importer any goods you may need that we do not carry. You can take the money you have and give it to the other creditors, with the understanding that you will have no partnership with the man you were to take in with you." Bennie readily complied with this condition, saying that he had already determined to have no further business relations with the man referred to.

Before the manufacturer and jobber left, Bennie had paid all of his creditors, except one or two who agreed to wait

until he was able to pay them after he got in business again. When he went around with his check book and statements, most of those he owed agreed to give him ten per cent off, and wanted to sell him all he needed, or would take in his store. While he was getting straightened out and trying to get a store in a suitable location, a big merchant, just half a block from where his store was burned, failed. His receivers sold goods at almost any price. When the staple goods were sold, and he saw that there was not enough cash taken in to pay his clerks, he went to Bennie, and offered to sell at his own price. When it was reported that Bennie was going to buy the stock and move in the unlucky corner, some of the old men who had known Bennie's father when they were boys, went to him and asked him not to move in that store, as no one had ever done business there without failure. Besides, it seemed that no one could succeed on that street without selling whiskey. Bennie told them that he had never sold whiskey and didn't intend to, as he would plow an ox again before he would sell it. Also that he was going to try to make that corner the "lucky corner" from then on.

The deal on the old stock was closed and new goods began to come in. Business became better with him than it had ever been before. All his obligations were met promptly, including the notes given to his northern friend. His credit was all that he desired, and he knew how to keep it that way, by being cautious in his business. The old corner that had been known as the "unlucky corner" changed its name to the "lucky corner" as the business increased each year, through the friendship of the hundreds of new customers that were gradually increasing throughout the territory that supported the city. Several steamers made regular trips, some of them each day, whose officers were old friends of Bennie's, who directed their passengers to his store as the best place to trade. This had its effect, and his business soon became popularly known by the many nice things said of him by others, some of whom were old citizens who had

known his father before he married Bennie's mother. The good name of the parent is one of the greatest assets that children can have, as it will take them where money cannot.

OUR FRIENDS THAT HAVE GONE

Dedicated Christmas Day—December 25th, 1920

Where are our old friends gone?
Those that we knew and loved years ago,
We loved them, we miss them, more and more;
Will we clasp their hands on the other shore?

Yes we will see them and feel their clasp,
They signal to their friends come,
We are waiting, watching and praying;
Come to the happy home we are staying.

Come, say they, give us your heart clasped hand,
And join the Holy Christian Band,
Who are waiting there in their mansion;
In that long looked for promised land.

Our earthly home is fast becoming frail,
We soon will need a new abode.
Have we been building a home on high,
Where there will be no sorrow, guile or sighs?

Yes, we again expect to be with our friends,
Where there will be no more parting,
But Joy unspeakable in that Heavenly abode;
Where sin and sorrow cannot go.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW ERA

In hiring his help, Bennie generally employed well-raised boys from the country, as they were not so accustomed to watching the clock. Although crude at first, they usually developed into the very best of help, and he advanced them as fast as their interest in the business justified, paying them far better salaries as a rule than other clerks received. He also paid them weekly instead of monthly, and placed the fullest confidence in them and demanded the best service in return. No drinking or cigarette smoking was tolerated, and full weight and good treatment of customers was insisted upon. This method of training developed very good help, which gave Bennie time to pay more attention to the betterment of political and other affairs. Like his father, he had a contempt for the professional office hunter and took delight in helping defeat corrupt office holders, so he led the fight in his own township while on the farm, to put out of business the corrupt machine that was not careful in dealing out justice, except as it suited them. Before he left his farm, they were not to be seen at a convention and were considered a thing of the past. He found that city politics were far worse than politics in the country, as the political machine and big business were in partnership, to a great extent, the politician holding the offices and drawing the salaries and the special interests being allowed all the advantage they might want, contrary to the best interests of the citizens themselves. He soon lined himself on the side of those who were fighting these evils, but as it had been for several years past led by a rich old Jew merchant who was as shrewd as he was thought to be corrupt, and it meant defeat every time for those who dared to try to get better men at the head of the city government. As he had always taken great interest in the advancement of his

State, even when on the farm, he began writing articles for many of the leading papers, advocating protection of the forests, good roads, better stock and drainage, and more equitable rates from the railroads, telegraphs, etc. His letters caused a great deal of comment.

At that time the larger papers were not so much under the influence of big business as they have become since, and many were eager to have articles out of the old, long-used rut, but when the people began to think, as so few do, the special interests of the State began to tighten down on those papers that they could bring pressure on, through their owned politicians in the different counties. Consequently, it was not long before those who dared to advocate those advanced ideas were branded as wild-eyed populists that were a menace to the country. Of course, those who had left them to do their thinking believed them, as they saw it in the papers. It was natural that these papers only let their editors tell them what they wanted them to think. In this way, any man who had given his thought and time to the honest betterment of humanity was only a dissatisfied office-seeker and an enemy to his country. When he found that new ideas of pleas for the betterment of conditions would not be published in the majority of the papers of the State, he started a small weekly paper of his own, filled principally with his own editorials and ads. His little publication needed no extra advertising, as the special-interests papers saw to that without pay.

Few people in the State were better known than he was, and his business continued to grow. He went to the manufacturing companies and importers and arranged to handle most of his goods direct, through brokers and agents. He had all of his orders, except for his local territory, shipped direct from the factory to his customers, the invoices coming to the main office to be rebilled. Mainly he handled the articles that would sell and give a fair profit, content to let his competitors handle the heavy goods that required more money

to handle, but less profit to the jobber. His trade was on anything that he could sell, and extended as far north as Boston, west to the Mississippi, south to the West Indies. When shipping his cargoes of shingles and other products of his home territory, he would have the vessel bring back a cargo of fruit to distribute to the trade throughout the towns near by. He supplied the lumber mills' orders for shingles (his largest booking for one week was eighteen hundred thousand), handling about all the output that were either sawed or rived. He knew where to place his order, as all of them were his customers, and he felt that the more of their products he could sell, the more trade he would likely get from them in return.

The same applied to merchants handling farm produce. When the market would become stagnant on any commodity at his home port, he would get busy at distant cities to find a market for them—field peas, eggs, deer tongue, etc. When finding where they could be disposed of at a fair price, he would have his men buy up all that they could, at prices that would enable them to sell, to be shipped to his places of business, to be reshipped in car lots, unless he could buy car lots, such as field peas or peanuts, then he would have them loaded in car lots and ship to himself to points where sold. In one season he shipped thirty-one solid cars of field peas to New Orleans and Cincinnati for farmers, who used them to sow down and turn under for fertilizing the soil. The price to the home growers in North Carolina was raised from thirty-five cents per bushel to ninety cents the first year. The next season they received one dollar and ten cents, and on, until those who did what they saw others doing went in and soon had the market down. It was generally the practice of those who didn't know how to find and keep business, but he had two to three years before they got on to his home shipments of new business.

All this time he ran his paper, doing his writing after he went home to his family, as he was then married and had

three or four children. Often he would work until after midnight, getting material ready for the printer. His paper was independent democrat, but its independence from party slavery did not suit the other controlled political organs, and first one and then another would pitch on the paper with all their might to crush its influence, but when the *New Era* came back at them to the blare of the public and the influence behind them, they no doubt held their spite against its editor, but never tackled it more than the second time. His independence was cutting rather a breach in their well-padded berths, as with his growing business and influence he was exerting in the territory he was becoming a competitor to some of his most piqued rivals. It gave some of them the necessity to do anything they thought would injure his influence, but that did not stop his determination to do all he could to defeat the corrupt political ring in his city; and about this time, demonetizing of silver began to be advocated, and it was not long before the big banking houses, headed by G. W. Williams & Co., of New York, began sending out letters to all the banks and merchants of the country, calling on them to do all they could to get their representatives in Congress to vote to demonetize silver. Bennie received one of these urgent letters himself. Williams & Co., the New York bankers, stood at the top of Wall Street trust about as Morgan, Kahn & Co. do now. Having been a close student of political economy at school, under a noted teacher, he could not help seeing the injustice of the large banks calling in all the gold in the country and getting it in their possession, and then demonetizing silver, which was half of our basic money, and that its certificates were used for trading purposes, as the gold was held by the banks. Besides, the bankers were the holders of most of the nation's bonds, issued when silver and gold were on a par, as well as other debts, notes, etc., when silver was basic money along with the gold.

His transformation from luxury to slavery, the long years he had to work until he was nearly grown, to pay old debts,

made when money was cheap, and paid at the sacrifice of everything except honor, when money was scarce, had taught him something that few had an occasion to learn, and after giving much thought to the question, he knew that to cut off half our money supply would give the half left double its purchasing power, and the banker or man that had his wealth in bonds or money would share the gain, while those in debt or who did not have their wealth in gold currency would be the ones to suffer at the expense of the money monopolists. For that reason, the day that the mass-meeting was called, advertised for days by all the papers, as they never tire of serving those they depend upon, such a crowd had not before been seen in the chamber of commerce, there being seats to seat not more than a third of the crowd—the remainder stood like sardines in their cans. The meeting was called to order by its president, he calling on some one of the bank directors to explain the object of the meeting, as had been sent him and all other bankers and chambers of commerce over the entire country. When he had finished making his audience believe that silver ought to be demonetized, as it was being mined and coined as fast as precious gold was, and that the country would soon be ruined if its coinage was not stopped, he did not tell them the government could demonetize gold in the place of silver if it chose. This would have been equally as wrong, but that was not orders from Lombard Street in England and Wall Street in New York, hot from our money manipulators, nor did he tell them that the government could demonetize both silver and gold, and stamp or print its money out of paper or raw hides or anything it might choose, and make it legal tender for all debts, etc., and all the wealth of the government would be the security for the notes it saw fit to issue. This would take the representation of all our wealth out of the money trust that manipulates, and the financial destiny of all the people, held so long, until they think it their divine right to thus hold those special privileges that enable them to control every-

thing here below, and many no doubt think their liberal gifts to the poor, whom they make and help keep poor, will entitle them to a seat in Heaven, but they are as blind in that as they are in most of their doings. Being able to control newspapers, railroads, banks, and our money, they well know that the balance is easy, but they have never stopped to think in any age, until they find it too late, as was in the case of the original starter, Williams & Co., in Wall Street, of the war on silver. When they had carried their point, the people became frightened, withdrew their deposits from the banks to a great extent, and banks began to break all over the country. Before the end, Williams & Co., the greatest bankers of Wall Street, had to close their doors, and its head passed out to a place where he had to meet a Judge that has no respect for persons, except those who follow His teachings.

After the cut-and-dried program had been debated, a motion was made to adopt a long resolution to be sent our Congress. On being put to a vote, it was unanimous, with the exception of one vote, which was Bennie's, who arose and gave in a few minutes his reasons for voting against it. If a bomb had fallen into the meeting, it would not have caused more comment, as many in the meeting had voted before they had given any thought to the question. One lone voice for silver, out of an audience of about two hundred. This gave Bennie a chance to answer the headlines in one of the leading papers, which gave a slur, as he took it to be, by giving his reason for voting "no." In a day or two, there was a reply to his article from one in a town of the State, signed R. M. C. Bennie answered it, which came out Sunday morning following. The matter became quite an interesting topic on the streets and wherever the paper was read. The next Sunday, R. M. C. had replied, and each one had his reply alternately in each Sunday's paper, but the readers said that Bennie's articles were far in advance of R. M. C.'s, and it was learned afterward that R. M. C. had gotten one of the leading attorneys in the city to help him get up his articles; and when it

was beginning to be talked that Bennie was swamping both in one of his opponents, this prominent attorney, whose father was a Wall Street Stock Exchange member, is said to have sent Bennie's articles there to be answered. They came back, signed R. M. C., but postmarked in R. M. C.'s own town. Bennie discovered, as soon as he read the first answer, written by the shrewdest Wall Street attorney, that there had been more help added to the controversy, and while he was quite busy attending to his business, yet he would take a few minutes at his desk alone and answer R. M. C. and his helpers' arguments.

This series of *pro*-and-*con* controversy went on for about six months. The proprietor said that he sold more issues of the paper than ever before, and never had enough to fill his orders from every section of the country, as the more it was discussed, the more interested the people became. It was not long before Bennie had his New York competitor where he needed help, and when he began to send out letters that contained mostly what Bennie had seen in circulars stereotyped and sent out from Wall Street, he knew that they were at their limit, and it was not long before even the "goldbugs," as they were called, had to admit that their advocator got the worst end of the argument. One of Bennie's friends, who was closely connected in a large bank, told him the secret of the plot to down him on the argument, and while he was one of the so-called goldbugs, he said the secret was too good to keep, since he had won over his opponents by the consensus of the people generally, and said the man who fathered all the articles reversed his initials, but he made Bennie promise not to give the information away. Soon after the controversy closed, which was after Bennie put questions to him that he dared not answer, as he was aware that he was arguing against all the talent the goldbug could muster, and when they were asked for full particulars of help employed, they were not heard of any more.

In the meantime, Bennie had been sending a copy of the paper during the controversy to W. J. Bryan, who had come out against demonetizing silver, and who wrote to Bennie at the close of the controversy that he had not received letters with more convincing arguments from any one than were in his articles. The articles were printed in some of the leading papers of the West, and later Bennie received a complimentary copy of "Coin," Harvey's book, and wrote him that while he did not need his book, as he had kept up with his articles on coinage and against the demonetizing of silver, which he considered one of the best arguments that he had had the pleasure of reading.

During this time the State Democratic Committee had issued a call to all its members to meet at the State capital to consider the policy of the party. When they met, as might have been expected, they voted that in their opinion it would be for the best interest of the country for the party to advocate the single gold standard, and so recommended it. He knew that the party leaders were expecting to decide before they went to the capital, as there are few servants that know not their masters.

In the meantime Bennie's weekly was kept full of his reasons for opposing the demonetizing of silver, and he was sending a copy to every merchant in the State put down in Bradstreet, as well as an equal number, if not more, of the farmers and other citizens, and received letters from all over the State commending his stand and volunteering service.

OUR CONSCIENCE

Is it not well we do not see the Ghost,
The one that knows of us the most,
Of all the things in our life,
Things done that keep us from feeling exactly right.

Though it is our Ghost we all should fear,
Though we may not think it is always near,
Yet it reminds us that we are weak,
And it is well that to us our Ghost sometimes speak.

It is this Ghost that shadows our lives
Of the things we think we safely keep,
Though in silence we may think it is asleep,
Yet he keeps whispering to us of the past,
The things we would like to forget.

Then be careful not to fall asleep
At the Evil One's cunning feet;
If you do, he will soon have you on the retreat,
Instead of becoming meek, so we may rest in our sleep.

He soon had a strong organization in over half of the counties of the State, and they plainly announced that they would not vote for any candidate or party that was opposed to the coinage of silver equal to that of gold. When the State Democratic Convention was called, there were more than a few of the merchants, who had found no time before to attend conventions, that were so far from their homes, but the Executive Committee found that they were to be considered, and soon began to fall over each other to take side of the boys who carried the votes, and they adopted resolutions condemning the demonetization of silver, and would count it the greatest crime of the age to do so. The Populist party had already endorsed it, and sent a committee to wait on the Democratic Convention, offering to co-operate or fuse with the Democrats if they would give them recognition by letting them have one of the State offices, any one, to show recognition, but the goldbug element almost foamed at the mouth, as they had already planned to run an independent Democratic ticket, which they did later—Palmer and Buckner. They were working to keep the silver forces separated. The convention did its work and went home, but it was noticed that some of the electors that were nominated were thought to be for gold, though soon afterwards the Populist Executive Committee met, and invited the Executive Committee of the Democratic party to meet at the same time, as well as the silver organization. When the day arrived, the committees were there, as well as the delegates from the silver

clubs of the State. Bennie, being chairman of the silver organization, was its principal spokesman, and the proposition of fusing with the Populists on electors and one State office came up again at the same time. The Republicans had offered to fuse with the Populists, who held the balance of power in the State, by letting the Populists name their terms, but their chairman and State Senator, Marion Butler, had repeatedly refused to consider their overtures, as their party stood for the gold standard, while the Populists were for both gold and silver.

After the friends of silver worked two days and nights trying to get co-operation between the two parties, the red-hot partisans in the Democratic party refused to yield a single State office, as they seemed too anxious to hold all for themselves, but they were warned by Bennie that they would lose the State offices. The majority said they would win, and would risk it; so, after the salaried officers could not be gotten to give up one office to the Populists, the earnest silver men in all three organizations began to try to get co-operation on the electors. After a day and night more, there was an agreement reached between the two parties to co-operate on the electors—there were eleven to be chosen—the Democrats were to have five, the Populists five, and the silver organization one. The organization settled on Bennie for the eleventh elector, but he flatly refused to serve, telling them that he had more than two men could well look after; besides, he never had, and never wanted to have, any ambition to hold a public office. However, he did ask the privilege of naming one of the best men in the State, who was strong, with a large following that had walked out of the National Republican Convention with Senator Tellar and others, condemning his lifelong party for its betrayal to the money trust, that he was honest and honorable as well as courageous. When they asked who he was, Bennie named him—Dr. M—— thinking, as most of the others did, that he was a splendid fit.

Feeling that everything had been arranged satisfactorily, Bennie bade his friends good-night, warning the leaders of the Democratic party that they were making a big mistake in not co-operating all the way down, and many of them thought the same thing. Everything being settled, as he thought, he took the late train for home. The next night he received a telegram, saying that some of the committee wouldn't consent to putting Dr. M—— on the ticket, and they wanted to use his name. He wired back, expressing his regrets at their action, and suggested another name, who was a splendid man in every way, and a Democrat. The next day a telegram came, saying that the Democrats wouldn't agree to accept anyone but him, and if he refused to serve, all would fail. He then wired that he did not want the place, under any consideration, and would only consent to keep the co-operation from failing; then only would he consent to the use of his name. In the next morning's paper the dispatch reported that, after a week of wrangling, they had settled on all of the electors, and, to Bennie's disappointment, his name was chosen.

A few days afterward, Bennie received a letter to go to the capital to help arrange for the campaign. After spending a day helping to get all the plans made, he was ready to leave on the four o'clock train next morning. Upon arrival he was told by the night clerk at the hotel that the Democratic committeeman of his town was in the city, and supposed to be stopping there, but he had not been there in several nights, and ought to be looked after. Upon inquiring of the clerk if he knew where he was, he was told where the clerk had heard he was. They found a hackman who promised to be at the place for him at two o'clock and have him at the hotel in time to be at the depot for the train. When Bennie went down into the lobby to settle his bill, the hackman had his man, but he wasn't in a traveling condition; also his money was gone and he did not seem to know what had become of it. Bennie took charge of him at the depot, paying for his break-

fast. The man had a pass, being a newspaper man, and Bennie looked after him until he landed in his own town. When Bennie arrived at the capital, he was told that the Colonel he helped to get back home had done all he could to keep the other committeemen from putting him on the Electoral Committee. Bennie replied that he was sorry that he did not succeed. He then came home, the work of the campaign having been planned.

He filled his paper with interesting reading from then on. A summons came to him in a few days to meet at Kansas City with the Populists and the silver organization of the entire country, to see if there could be a co-operative ticket named, so as to get all of the silver forces to vote for Bryan, who had been nominated by the Democrats. Bennie was there to attend the meeting, arriving the day before, mingling with all of the "silverites" — men like St. John, of New York, a noted banker, who, rather than submit to what he conceded to be a great injustice, offered his resignation to his directors, which, of course, was accepted, as no man's opinion counts for anything with those whose whole aim is more money, by any means.

When the meeting was called to order, the great hall was packed, from every part of the country, the Populists outnumbering all others many times. Bennie had found out by mingling with them that they were opposed to any compromise, and wanted nothing to do with the Democrats, as they only wanted their votes, and in the end would swallow their party whole. While it looked gloomy, yet there was not anything to do but to make the fight on the floor of the convention, and Bennie was one of the first on his feet when the convention was called to order, making a motion that Mr. St. John be made chairman, and while it was being seconded there were several others nominated. After the nominations were all made, he got the attention of the chair and spoke in behalf of his motion, giving his hearers his reason for naming a man who had sacrificed his great position

for conscience's sake, and that the convention would show its unworthiness in meeting if they did not show their gratitude for such heroism. After he sat down, the question was called for at once, the vote taken giving St. John a majority of the votes, and he was declared elected.

The meeting was declared ready for business. Scores of resolutions were offered at once, all opposing co-operation. Each resolution was referred to the committee on resolutions, which was soon named by the chairman. In the meantime it seemed that every one wanted the floor at the same time, but the chairman, being a fine parliamentarian, kept all in line and motions in order. When the convention closed for lunch it was about where it started, only it could be seen that there was no intention on the part of the majority to have only a straight Populist ticket; but after the resolutions committee commenced, it did not want to report until the temper of the crowd had changed or gotten tired and left. It was two days in getting its report before the convention. When it was reported, Bennie, with many others who were on the committee, spoke for its adoption, which was that each party should nominate its regular ticket, then co-operate with the Bryan electors in order that the electoral vote could be cast for Bryan, and in the State where the Populists carried, for the Populist Vice-President. Had a vote been taken when the resolution was presented, it would have been overwhelmingly defeated. The chairman having to recognize various speakers, it was kept from coming to a test until the committee was ready to report, and many of the fire-eaters got disgusted and left. Others were persuaded not to throw away the only chance there was to elect a man for President who was truly for silver coinage as well as for gold.

After the convention finished and all had become reconciled, those in attendance dispersed for their homes. A few days later, reports came that there was no way, apparently, to untangle the situation in regard to electoral votes, with two sets of candidates running. Up to then, no thought had been

given to it, but after many days of heated debates on the knotty problem, "Coin" Harvey offered the solution, which was accepted by all as the plan. Bennie had offered the same plan, after worrying over it for days and nights, to the Associated telegraph dispatcher, whom he had brought home from the State capital, and had opposed any co-operation. He being the owner of the oldest Democratic paper in the State, but being blinded with party prejudice, refused to take it as news, or even print the plan that would untangle the situation, stating that the Democrats would not vote for d—— Populist electors if they were on the Democratic ticket, but the plan offered by Bennie was published in an afternoon paper three days before Mr. Harvey gave out his plan, which was the same that was offered to the Associated news dispatcher. They did vote for the Populist electors in this State, carrying it for Bryan by thirteen thousand and five hundred votes. The Populists who fused with the Republicans in State and county offices, after the blind partisanship in the Democratic party had refused to co-operate with them on their own terms, were defeated by twelve thousand votes, thus electing Russell for Governor, while the Democratic candidate would have been Governor if the Democrats had acted wisely. When they saw that they were defeated, there was great disappointment, as is the case when one set of officers have to move out to give their warm berths to their political opponents.

As the negro was voting then, and the Democrats owned about all the newspapers, it did not take long to make the people of the State and the balance of the world believe that the State was in a fearful condition, when really all the important offices of the State were held by white people, mostly from the Farmers' Alliance and the Populist party. Few, if any, negroes were elected to any office, certainly not to any office of consequence, but the first Legislature which, as soon as all officers had taken hold, appointed, as a rule, about one-third of the school committeemen in the eastern counties,

where their vote was largest, the same as the Democrats had formerly done, two white school committeemen and one negro for each township, the latter supposed to look after and take the census of the negro children, with the law that two of the committee were sufficient to control the schools, sign all vouchers, which left with the two white committeemen control of the schools. A few minor offices were filled by negroes, but not enough to give them power to control. The Populists were a part of the old Democratic party who had rebelled and left it because they claimed that it was completely controlled by the railroads and other corporations, and the former Populist-Democrat would not stand for it.

The Legislature made many new laws, putting more of the burden of State upon these corporations by reducing railroad fares, telegraph and telephone charges, and forming a railroad corporation commission for the State, to look over the railroads and other public utilities, to regulate them, etc.; also it elected two United States Senators. State Senator Marion Butler was elected for six years to fill the place formerly held by Senator Ransom, and State Senator Jeter C. Pritchard was elected to fill the unexpired term of Senator Vance, who had died.

A change in many of the State laws was made, but when they began to reduce fares and freight charges, telegraph and telephone expenses, etc., then war broke out, and every means, both fair and foul, mostly the latter, was used to discredit the party in power, as these big gentry had held sway for years, and they could brook no equal nor endure any law they could not dictate.

While the Legislature was in session, there were two or three negroes representing one or two of the eastern counties having a large negro population. This was also true in former years under Democratic administration. This was more than the Democrats and the corporations could stand, after the Democrats had foolishly thrown away their chance of

election. With their army of attorneys, riding on free passes and controlling the press, their papers put on red paint, which the Populists said was poke-juice. Whether is was, or not, their headlines were large and red enough to frighten a blind man if he had been told what they looked like. No man's character, regardless of his record, was immune from their attack if he was a Populist or Republican. A preacher of the Gospel (and there were several in the Legislature) was shown no more consideration than if he were a criminal, as many weeping wives, mothers, and sisters could bear testimony. No doubt some of the leaders in these outrages have gone to answer for them before a just Judge. It took nearly twelve months to get these laws enforced against railroads; then they carried their cases from court to court, until the people never received any reduction of charges, as the Republicans and Populists only controlled one more Legislature.

When the third Legislature was to be elected, the Democrats went down in one of the strongest negro counties in the State to secure a chairman as manager of their campaign, who, it is said, had learned to count the Republican and negro votes for the Democrats, and who instructed his pollholders and workers all over the State as to his method of counting; also how to dress in red shirts and big plumes. There was plenty of "red-eye" to be had for the mere hunting, with plenty of money, and it was said that guns were stored in some of the railroad storage rooms. All this came on during the panic that came during and after Cleveland's administration. With thousands of loafing men everywhere, it was doubly easy for the Democratic chairman to gain recruits, and when the election returns were all in, he had carried his State by the biggest count ever given his party, the largest majority coming from where there were the most negroes, though it was claimed that but few of them in the eastern counties pretended to vote, but the returns did not indicate that their vote was not counted, and thus the State had been

saved, as it was claimed, from negro domination, notwithstanding the fact that there were from three to four white voters in the State to every negro.

Judging from this, the North Carolina negro must be the smartest in the world, to have such power against such a majority of white people. The character of the white men who were elected to office by the Populists and Republicans compared favorably with those holding office under the former Democratic administration, and many of the laws that they enacted were needed, and were some of the best that the State had up to that time. It could be said at least, that it was not under the ruling corporation of the State, though they used great influence, and caused much trouble among the two factions of the Republican and Populist parties. Of course the State Democratic Chairman rose at once from the Railroad "cow lawyer" to be senator of the United States and the everlasting gratitude of the little county officers as well as those who feed from the county and State crib was given, and they still feel grateful to the chairman for teaching how to count, and with their little county machine, they have formed one big State machine, that also expresses gratitude to themselves, as well as to the chairman, who knows so well how to control correspondents of newspapers, and the office holder as a rule in his State that it would be a crime to deprive him of his high senatorial seat, when he is of such *great service to big business firms all over the country,* at the same time knowing how to do so much for the masses through the headlines of the controlled press to be tuned and sung by his machines who look after his interests so cunningly, that he had them all guessing *except the big business interests.*

Our Creator, our family, our country we should love,
This we must show by our actions now begun,
If happiness, prosperity and contentment we are to gain,
Lest we will continue to be cursed by the present Simmons reign.

When the honest and righteous rule, the people rejoice,
Not since the Simmons machine has debauched the good name of our
State,
Now isn't it time for all honest people to be on the go,
And dethrone the wicked who should not be allowed to rule any more.

If peace and justice you and your family are to have,
Arouse your neighbors and do all you can
To elect a man we can all trust and understand,
And happiness and contentment will no longer shun our land.

Honest men, our State will shun,
If many reforms from this wicked reign is not begun,
In this we are expected to do our best,
Then we all will see that to elect honest men will be the best.

CHAPTER IX

POLITICS IN THE CITY

During this time, the city government of the largest city of the east had changed hands. The leader who had ruled it for about fifteen years, and most of the time had been its mayor, was soon to be elected again, as the city had five wards, each electing two aldermen, and they in turn electing one of their number as mayor. Knowing the art of ward politics, he would have two of his friends in each ward to run, having disbursement of most of the funds, he and his friends for the city government, working streets and all other work needed, he naturally knew how to keep his fences in order; besides, he had the largest clothing and gents' furnishing store in that section of the State, and any who would vote for him, it was said, could run an account at his store.

When the time came for his next election, a notice was given of a caucus to be held by the voters of his ward to meet on a certain night, and select a candidate to be voted for the following night, the program going through as planned. Bennie was out of the city for a few days, and on reaching his office about ten o'clock a. m., it was not many minutes before there came into his place a broker. Bennie inquired for the news of the city. The broker said: "I suppose that you have heard about the caucus last night." Bennie replied that he hadn't and asked to be told all about it. He was then told that the same old candidate was nominated for mayor that they had tried to defeat for fifteen years, and his re-election was practically certain. "What is being done to defeat him?" Bennie asked. "Not a thing," said the broker, "as we have decided it is useless. He has so much money and the city machinery is in his hands so completely that we have decided not to make another useless

fight on him." Bennie said that he would not let him walk over again if it could be prevented, and asked the broker, who had been one of the faithful ones to relieve the city of its burdens, who would, in his opinion, form a good committee to have in conference. The broker gave him twelve names written on a slip of paper, including the two who were talking. In a few seconds he was at the telephone calling each one as their names appeared on the list, asking if they would come down there at once. Each wanted to know "What is it?" The answer was that it was too important to tell over the telephone. Naturally each one's curiosity was aroused, and their answer was "Yes."

In less than a half hour, all were there, and they were asked to go back where persons on the street could not see them. As soon as all were there, Bennie explained the object of the call. All thought like the broker, when told that the object was to keep it from being known to the other side, and that the only hope was to catch them on the blind side, as that was the case of the leader. The first thing that was asked was, would each one start out at once, and see every "anti" man in his block, when he went for his lunch, and get them to get all the anti men that they could, to meet at the same place at four o'clock sharp, but to go upstairs by a back step so as to attract as little attention as possible, but to bind every man who came to secrecy.

At four o'clock sharp, there were between thirty and forty men upstairs, seated on benches or planks, supported by boxes, etc. As soon as the meeting was explained to those that were not at the meeting in the forenoon, the first question that came up was whom would they suggest for alderman. In less time than it takes to tell it, some one had proposed Bennie's name, and before he had time to say anything, it was agreed to by every man there. Having no desire for it or any other office, he refused to let his name be used, but suggested a neighbor who lived next door to him, and insisted on making him the candidate, but there was so much

opposition to his name that it was withdrawn, and another man who was present, and there was no better in the town, was nominated and elected unanimously. It was five-thirty p. m. and no tickets printed, and the real primary was to commence at eight p. m. A committee was sent to a friendly printing house, with instructions to stay there and have the tickets ready by seven-forty. At seven-thirty, the antis began to come, as every anti had promised to be there that was in the ward.

At eight o'clock the large building was well crowded, but no tickets yet. Bennie paced the floor up and down stairs, smoking his cigar, often chewing the end off; every anti man would either smile as he passed or stop to ask a question in a low voice, receiving as an answer only a nod or a shake of the head. Becoming more and more impatient about the tickets, he went down to the sidewalk, and saw two men coming in a gait between a walk and a trot. He soon recognized them and as soon as they were near enough, the tickets were handed to him, but he gave one package back and asked that they help to distribute them, quietly to all the antis. When all the tickets were distributed to the right crowd, it was going on to nine o'clock.

The cry soon began, open the polls to the registrar, who held the books, and while more time was asked, so that others might get there, the demand to open the polls could not be resisted, and then two men with tally sheets to take the names of all the voters, asserting whom he voted for (though every anti man knew every other anti man in his ward), and as some of them had hunted foxes with their hounds, they knew that every once in a while they would come to an old cunning fellow that would fool the dogs every time, and it would often be years before he was captured, so all of a kind, who had been chasing the old fox for about fifteen years, knew that he had to be watched to the very last minute. When the ballot box was opened, the old fox's fellows flocked up and shot their big gun at the beginning, but when the

antis began, they kept things moving so fast that it was seen by the old fox's men that they were outwitted, and when time came to close the books and count the votes, the antis had won by a majority of about eighteen, to the surprise of the entire city. The old pro-crowd were so certain that it would be only a ratification meeting that there was no great effort to get their vote out.

This was the first time the old fox had been defeated in about fifteen years and meant that he would not be mayor the next term. The regular election came off in a few weeks and each of the candidates that were nominated in the Democratic caucuses were elected; the legislature, under the influence of the governor, had gotten through a special act to appoint one alderman from each ward and the voters to elect the other one. There being five wards, it meant five to be appointed and five to be elected. There were more whites than negroes in all the wards except two. The negroes generally voted for whomever their boss told them to, sometimes a Democrat and sometimes a Republican, so the negro had always been represented on the board of aldermen. The governor had named three white men, with the three whites that were already elected, and was being besieged to name the fourth white man, which he said he would do, but the Democrats, who camped at the capital, wanted the defeated mayor named, or at least one of his kind. Also they wanted him to use his influence to have the old incompetent chief of the fire department, who worshipped his position more than he did anything else, as they drew seventeen thousand five hundred dollars from the city on which to have a good time.

The runners ran fast, and every day you could hear of different delegations that were at the capital, pleading with the governor to appoint this one or that one, and it was the fox crowd that was generally before him, but a week before time for the aldermen to meet and organize, Bennie received a telegram from the governor, asking him if he would accept

the alderman's place from his ward. Bennie wrote him that he could not see why he should offer him the place, that there were but few who would not accept it, including Democrats who had voted for the governor, while Bennie did not ever raise his voice, or his paper in his behalf, and had besides spent several days at the capital, writing bushels of letters trying to persuade the Bourbon machine to co-operate with the Populists, and carrying the State as the electoral vote was, while he felt kindly towards him for the kindness shown his father during the war, but did not attend the governor's inaugural reception when he was in the capital. (He also wired the governor on receipt of his telegrams thanking him and stating that he could not accept.) He then wired his first lieutenant, who was chairman of the board of audit and finance of the city, the others were Democrats and had been for years, giving the entire control of the finance to the Democrats, as every dollar that was expended had to be approved by them before they could get the money. So when the chairman came to see Bennie with his urgent request from the governor to accept, stating that he knew he was honest and would give the city his best efforts and see that no grafting was allowed as it appeared in former administrations, his reply to the chairman was the same as it had been to the governor, only he told him that he was offered the place by the Democrats and had refused, but got a good man in his place. The chairman said that the same old gang that had used the city so long as if it belonged to them, were camping on the governor's campus and that if he did not take it, one of them would no doubt get it. Bennie answered that he was sorry, but that he did not want it, and did not have the time to attend to it. That night about nine o'clock his doorbell rang; when he answered it, he found the chairman, with another telegram telling him to see Bennie, and ask him where his patriotism was that he preached so long in his paper, that every man owed to his home and his country enough of his time and thought to help make it a better place

to live in, and said further that if he didn't accept, that he would see some one else appointed he would not like to have the place; also that the fine work that had been done would be lost if Bennie refused. Bennie tried to suggest several names to him, but he said every man nearly in his ward had been mentioned that was worth considering. When he was leaving Bennie asked him to let him have until the next afternoon to see some of his friends. He agreed, saying that he would wire the governor that he would let him have a definite answer on the next afternoon before six o'clock.

He worried all the night, thinking over the matter. Early the next morning, as he left his home, he saw every anti man he could, and asked them what to do. Every single one insisted on his taking the place, by all means, even going so far as to condemn him harshly for not taking it at first. Going from home after lunch, he met the chairman at two o'clock at the postoffice, and told him his friends had persuaded him to accept the place. He wheeled at once and said that he would go and send the telegram. Speaking of the chairman, there was no better business man in the city. With all the dealings Bennie had had with him and his firm, selling them hundreds of thousands of shingles for their foreign trade, he never had the least trouble or misunderstanding with any of the firm. The only thing that they could say was, "Mr. C—— is a Republican, though a high Mason, and stood equally as high in his church."

The next morning the announcement of the appointment was made. Bennie had gained the prejudice and animosity of many of the politicians by his preferment over the professional politician by being chosen as a Bryan elector, and one of the two men in the State whom Bryan personally requested to go with him in his private car over the State during his campaign, and he was also invited to be one of the three guests of Vanderbilt for three days when he gave his great banquet in the interest of forest protection. All these things were too much for some, and they began to whis-

per it around that if Bryan was elected, the countryman from the backwoods would have the say as to every office to be given out. Many were asking what office he was going to have; his choice, of course, some would say, although Bennie assured them that he did not want a single office. Then some would ask who was furnishing the money that it took to do the work he was doing, to which he could truthfully reply that every cent he was spending was coming out of his own pocket, as he had not received one cent for what he was doing, and never expected to. That was another puzzle to those who made politics a financial gain, rather than that of duty one owes to his country, as long as he is able to help make better government.

Before the day arrived for the organization of the board of aldermen, he had seen two of the Republican aldermen appointed by the governor, both being contractors, Bennie having sold them shingles for years. He got their faithful promise that they would vote with him, and the three Democrats elected to organize the board; but the defeated, who had made their money out of controlling the affairs of the city, began to use their influence to keep the Democrats that were elected from qualifying. Having heard of their intentions, each of them was seen and urged to qualify when the day came, and each promised to do so.

The morning they were to be sworn in, each was present to take the oath of office. A few minutes before the time for them to take the oath, three of the leaders, including the defeated mayor and disgruntled who were defeated at the primary, as well as at the capital, marched up, each taking one of the elected Democrats by the arm out on the street, persuading them not to qualify, as it all was unconstitutional and would be so held by the higher courts. These disappointed politicians, after pleading earnestly for ever so long, finally succeeded in getting them not to qualify. This was their first successful move in bringing about what was their aim. The others were sworn in, but postponed

organizing, waiting on the others to qualify, but in the meantime influence was brought to bear on Bennie to get him to refuse to serve. His answer was, that he did not want the place, and only accepted it in order that he might be able to help protect the interests of his city, and he felt that if ever the city needed him and the other Democrats that were elected, it was then, and he expected to stand by the old town—not the Republican party—doing, without pay or hope of reward, all that he could to protect its rights.

When he could not prevail upon the rest of the aldermen to wait longer on the three Democrats to qualify, they then went into organizing the city's government. When this was agreed to by the majority, Bennie saw that his hope and plans were defeated, but refused to go into a secret caucus to name the officers, as he reminded them that, as it stood then, the Republicans would control the caucus, and if he went into it he would be bound by its action, which he refused to do, but would vote for men he thought worthy and competent of holding various positions. When the caucus had finished its work and came out to make its report, he voted against every one that he thought not competent of filling the place as well as they could be filled by some others, and put in nomination some one to be substituted, but the two who had promised to help organize saw that there was no chance after the three were kept from qualifying and serving; and while efforts were mostly futile in getting in those that were suggested by him, there were some very good men put in different places, though only a few Democrats.

When the various committees were created to take care of the city's financial interests, Bennie was named as head of each, such as chairman of finance, street improvements, water-works, and fire department, which was more than plenty; but he tackled his job like he did his own business, beginning by cutting off everything that appeared as favors rather than business. After three months work with the clerk of the board of audit and finance, who was a Demo-

crat, and no one with higher character, working from eight o'clock until eleven at night, the budget was completed, which enabled a reduction of ten cents on the tax rate, making the rate eighty-three instead of ninety-three, which gave an income of about one hundred thousand a year. The expenses of the fire department were cut down, and after he and the clerk of finance committee got through with shaving, they had appropriated eleven thousand dollars instead of seventeen thousand five hundred, as they had been getting. This was not done until an estimate of all the feed, drivers, blacksmiths, hose, engines, etc., had been ascertained. When totaled up, it was about one-half of what they had been drawing from the city under the former city administration, but there were about three hundred of them, most all boosters for the old regime, who were so free-hearted in allowing them such heavy allowance to keep up their pool clubs, etc., their wines and their dines; and they, being volunteers, had to be at their work.

The town was suffering at such a rate with fire losses that the leading fire insurance companies were threatening a withdrawal from it, but the row was on when they learned of the estimate for the department, the newspapers of the city being completely in sympathy with them, and the three hundred firemen, counting five to the family, there were one thousand five hundred people, with all their friends who had put on the war paint, besides the old fox with his new lieutenants, especially two who were with him to keep the men who had been elected to serve from doing so. The next day the announcement was in the papers of the cut in the allowance that was made, with woeful, threatening editorials. It must be remembered that the old fox was still the largest clothing dealer, and the papers pronouncing an anathema on the heads of the incompetent rulers of the city's affairs. The papers gave notice that there would be a meeting of all the controllers of the fire companies that night to decide what they would do. They held this meeting and passed resolu-

tions condemning the outrage, and said the keys of the fire department houses, etc., were at the disposal of the fire committee, as they refused to serve any longer. The chairman of the board of audit and finance saw Bennie as soon as he reached his office, and asked him what was to be done, as the mayor was all up in the air, as he did not know what to do. The chairman of the audit of finance was in his buggy, and he was asked if he would go up to the mayor's office and ask him if he would send some of the best policemen around to each of the fire departments and get the keys and keep guard over the property until new men could be gotten, and see those who manned the engines, equipment, etc., that they were receiving regular salaries. By twelve o'clock the chairman came back and all instructions had been carried out, and all the regular employees had agreed to remain. Before night, several of the volunteers had learned that it was the intention of the fire department to organize a paid department, and there were soon enough applicants to handle the department better than by volunteers. But when the notice was in the papers of the companies that had resigned, the oldest company had not made its decision, but would that night. Bennie lost no time in seeing its captain, and asked him not to let his company resign, and told him his intention, and while its captain was considered the best fireman in office in the city, he was told that if he would stand by his city in its hour of need, he would see that he was made chief, if he wanted it. The third chief, who was then in charge of his old company, had been offered another good place.

At the meeting that night, the action of the old company was postponed. The chief of the paid fire department of Atlanta, Ga., was asked if he would come and give instructions of how to organize the city's paid fire department, etc. The wire came back, "Yes." He was there in a few days, and all plans were made and extra equipment ordered. About this time fires were springing up all over the city, day and night, which gave the mouthpiece of the controlled press more

excuse to pour out its vitriol upon the incompetent negro administration, when the negroes had no more to do with it than the man in the moon. But the politicians in the city, as well as many over the State, saw that their point was made. The fires grew more and larger, until the largest school building was burned in the heart of the city. The next night a large vessel on the water front was burned, with minor fires here and there. When it was at its worst, the State press commenced their howl of sympathy for the negro-ruled town that was being destroyed as fast as time would let it.

When the State papers began in earnest in their blind indignation, it was the general topic of the streets, and no doubt martial law would have been asked for, if the governor had not been a Republican. It had gotten so hard on the nerves of the chairman of the audit and finance committee, as well as the mayor, that the chairman rushed to Bennie: "My God, what are we to do? They are going to burn the city if we don't turn the fire department over to them." "There is nothing else to do," Bennie answered. "The most sensible people of the city must know it is not the negroes, and if they haven't patriotism enough to help save the town by helping to get up with the firebugs, the town had just as well burn, as there is no hope for it."

About the time that the chief came from Atlanta, there was another big fire on the river front, and the next day the topic of the streets was the fire and the need of the old department. During the day, a young man, about grown, from Bennie's neighborhood, told him that he saw the man that set fire to the tar yard, when he lit a newspaper and applied it to the tar on the yard. When the fire first started, the light of it showed through the cabin door of the lighter that was tied to the wharf at the yard where the fire began. When asked if he knew the name of the man, he said that he did not, but saw him buy a pint of whiskey the day before from a groceryman, and that he would know him if he saw him again. He was asked to keep a watch on the streets for him,

and where he saw him buying the whiskey, and if he found him, not to say anything, but to hunt a policeman, and tell him to arrest the man at once. Before night he had found his man, also the policeman, who arrested him and took him to the guard-house. The young man from Bennie's neighborhood was positive enough to swear that it was the man he saw set fire to the tar yard, and the guilty man was found to be one of the members of the volunteer fire department, as well as having been a warm supporter of the old mayor.

The firebug was tried, convicted, and sent to the penitentiary for a number of years, and the mysterious fires ceased, and the newspaper organs had no comment to make when it was found out who was doing the burning, and the three chiefs of the plotters had to take new steps to carry out their plots. About the close of the year, it was seen that taxes were being reduced, with the treasury in better shape than it had been in some years, with a paid fire department, the only one in the State, costing only about twenty thousand dollars a year, and all extra equipment had been paid for out of the first year's budget. Also the National Insurance Company's Association that were threatening to withdraw from the insurance in the city had ordered a reduction in their rates, which saved the citizens twenty thousand dollars on insurance the first year.

When the board of aldermen were electing their men to hold certain positions, Bennie voted alone most of the time. A wire came from the governor to elect the old fire chief, who had charge of the old volunteer department, but as it had been promised to a competent man, he thought it his duty to protect the city in time of peril, notwithstanding that all misrepresentation that could be heaped on any city was resorted to by the plotters. The chairman of the fire committee told the remainder of the board if they decided to obey the governor to accept his resignation from the Board. This was made known to the governor and he wired back to let

him have his way, and the chief who had served so long with such ability still proves himself to be worthy of the position he holds.

The several hundred thousand bushels of oyster shells that had been contracted for paving the streets were cancelled, with threats of a suit against the city by one of the right hand bowers of the former mayor, which was another coal to help keep the fires burning, but it was seen that streets made out of such inferior material were not fit for a city; the lime dust was ruining the paint on the dwellings as well as the furniture on the inside. Arrangements were made by the chairman of finance of the board of aldermen, by getting the audit committee to approve same, to buy machinery to crush suitable rock that was found some miles from the city and while it was being hauled into the city, real street work began by beginning at certain places in the city to give it a thorough test. It was found to be fine street material, and that was the beginning of giving the city and county the best streets and highways in the State.

The street chairman soon began to work to get the city to own and operate its own water works, as the one that it had then was a disgrace. Water was so polluted that it was not fit for washing purposes, much less for drinking, and he got the board of aldermen to pass a resolution empowering the chairman of the water committee, with the consent of the majority of the audit and finance committee, to negotiate with a contractor for the drilling of a well, and erecting a plant with what surplus there was in the city treasury, and the back taxes that were not paid, though could be collected. The advertisement was inserted in the Manufacturer's Record, and other journals, and there were plenty of bidders. The contract was made with a party in Pennsylvania. They were to be paid so much per foot for a suitable sized well and were to stop as soon as a sufficient flow of water, fit, by chemical tests, for domestic use, was

obtained. And they were not to receive any pay until the work was completed in a satisfactory manner to the chairman and chemist of the city.

When the contractor had all of his outfit, three or four car loads, on the spot and began work, he was notified by a director of the leading bank that if he drilled the well he would get no pay for it, as the board of audit and finance had not given any approval of the city's contract, and would not. The chairman of the audit and finance committee and one other of the three on the committee, who was a Democrat, which was a majority of the three, told Bennie that they highly approved the drilling of the well, and that they would stand with him, the Democrat even patting him on the shoulder, commending him for his courage, and they said that up to then every man that attempted to force the company to give good water, was managed to be defeated for re-election if he dared to run again as a candidate for alderman, but they asked that he go on with the good work that was so much needed. However, it was only two or three weeks after when they saw the city would soon own its water works when every director in this big bank, even the one who patted him on the shoulder, bidding him God-speed in his good work, began fighting the new water works plant. The chairman of that board, whose partner was one of the directors, began to doubt when the showdown came.

When the cause of the change of forces was found out, it was said that this big bank had about sixty thousand dollars of the old water works company bonds being hypothecated in this bank, and it meant no doubt a big loss to them if the city should have a plant of its own. The chairman fought on, threatening to force by law if possible the approval of the contract that they had given verbally. The committee of audit and finance saw that something had to be done, and proposed that if the old company would give the man that was there to dig the city's well a contract to dig them a new well and guarantee good domestic water fit for all pur-

poses, would the chairman be satisfied? He told them no, in the presence of its officers, that all towns and cities ought to own not only their water and sewage systems, but should own their gas and electric plants, and also operate its own street car lines. However, seeing that he was up against it with the board of audit and finance, he agreed that if they would give pure water in six months time, and twelve fountains for the people's use, as well as for the animal's free use, to be placed in the city wherever the chairman of water designated, and would give a contract agreeing to do it, in a certain number of months, he would cease on it then.

The chairman met the officers of the water works company, and there was an iron-clad contract drawn up to be fulfilled in six months. This made the old contract with the city null and void, though it had been broken repeatedly for years. The chairman had the contract put in an envelope, marked and put in among the city's contracts, in the city's safe. Not living up to their contract, a few months after the plotters overthrew the city government, one of their officers being prominent in the overthrow. When things became more sane again, there was no second contract to be found, the ox having known his master's crib. The same energy was used to get the city to own its ferry, that was hindering the progress of the city, but after an order was gotten through the board of aldermen empowering the city to buy, it was rushed to the chamber of commerce for its indorsement as a matter of courtesy, but the owners of the stock were prominent members who stood always with special interests, and their influence kept the chamber from naming a committee for thirty days after the resolution to go to the capital to have the bill passed, until the prime mover in getting the free ferry, or bridge, saw the object of the president of the chamber of commerce was to block it. He then wrote to Dr. McN——, who was a State senator from the adjoining county, and asked that he get through a bill before adjournment, empowering the city to issue

bonds to buy same. He did so and three days before the legislature adjourned, the president of the chamber of commerce appointed his committee to go to Raleigh to get the bill through. His notice was answered, and he thanked him for his fine spirit, but informed him that the bill had been passed two weeks, if not, then it would have been too late, as no new bills would be considered fifteen days before adjournment.

The negotiating began—two business men, both Democrats, and the chairman of the finance committee to negotiate the deal. The owners wanted about three times what the committee thought it was worth, but the chairman saw the need of it for the city's interest, so much so that he got the committee to double what they thought was a big price for it. Even then they wanted more but the two citizens that were on the committee would not consent, and it was left to rest, to be taken up later. When the plotters succeeded, a few months afterwards, it was sold for a good deal less than half to private parties of what they were offered by the city, and for twenty years the heavy tolls to a private corporation were paid, as it had been for years before.

This was one of the troubles of the old city, that ought to have two hundred thousand inhabitants, and would have had, if it had not been for the selfish interests that controlled it. The leading clubs, as well as some of the leading churches where the little person thought that he had grown to become large and important when he was admitted into them, for his fine service rendered, and everything else that could help keep things as they were, were considered the best, yet they would still be little—brains, courage, and honest service counted for nothing if they would not bow to the will of those who were looking only for special service. It is true, the greater one's ability to serve, the more they were praised in the way that would be most effective. The man who was bold enough to contend for the best interests

of the masses had to be gotten rid of and would be treated with as little consideration as a vulture would a pig's maw.

Before the next election, the new mayor, a Republican doctor, wanted to run for sheriff, and as the place had been long held by a foxy Republican, there began much active work by both of the aspirants, and as most of their votes were negroes, it was who could win over on his side the majority of their leaders and the mayor, through his influence with the Republican aldermen, succeeded in adding to the police force about half a dozen more negroes than was on it before though warned four or five times in public meetings and had refused to vote for any of them for any place a white man could better fill, but the mayor kept the first that he had appointed out mostly in the negro settlement, but when he put more on the force, and let some of them go down town on the main streets, showing their ivory and brass buttons, though with instructions, it was claimed by the mayor, not to arrest any white man but to go for a white policeman if such an arrest was necessary, and seeing a big, black burly negro in his uniform beating on any street in the city, in the former administration, if he was a good negro, voting the Democratic ticket each year, the mayor may have thought that he could make some more good negroes by getting them to vote for him in place of his rival, the sheriff at that time. The papers in the city hardly let a day pass that they did not take the side of the negro, claiming that he was entitled to many times more of the offices than he was getting and better serving himself, the mayor taking the advice of the controlled press, he did what he did on his own volition, for no one seemed to approve of it.

THE TATTLER

The tongue of the tattler is Satan's best rattler,
It is hung on a pivot and its scope has no limit,
Angels it would as gladly destroy
As a vulcan would a pig's maw.

The tattler's work is never done,
For it is so full of energy already spun,
Its work once begun is never done,
Until every thoughtful person from it is on the run.

So beware of the tattler's tongue!
Let him learn that you have begun
To fear him worse than a gun,
Then his work will soon be done.

Induce him his Bible to read,
In it he might begin to see
That there is no decent place he can hold
As long as he lets his tattling tongue control.

CHAPTER X

RIOTS

About this time, the Red Shirt campaign had begun to throw their shirts to the wind, over the Eastern part of the State, and more crimes were committed by the impudent negroes and their leaders than were committed by the Germans upon the French and Belgians, until the facts were known what big liars there were in Europe, but the facts were not allowed to be known in North Carolina. The multiplication and adding machines, that do not lie unless you make them, were nowhere, compared to the way every little insignificant thing was magnified that happened in the city. These public newspapers, eager for excitable news, would print some frivolous thing, comment on it, twisting what was written to please their political bosses, some paper or many it might be would take up the outrages, as they were termed and after adding to it to suit their wits and prejudices, would send it broadcast to the public. It was often so changed when written by exchange papers that the original article would be printed by the first newspaper starting the report, and credit it as coming from the paper probably two hundred miles away, as what had happened in the city where the plotters were controlling the minds of the unthinking people. One of the editors and owners of a paper was an associated press reporter and he let loose all that a credulous people would believe. They had most of the innocent people, women and children, with the feminine men believing everything that was printed, as well as the news that was circulated and peddled on the streets.

This frenzied excitement went on until every one but those who were behind the plot, with a few exceptions, were led to believe that the negroes were going to rise up and kill all the whites, including women and children. In the

meantime Red Shirt clubs, called White Supremacy clubs, had been organized in every ward of the city and every white man in the city must sign. The call for the first mass meeting was signed by the three plotters that went up to the city's municipal building and led away the three Democratic aldermen that had been elected and went to qualify and serve the city. The mass meeting was well advertised, and the next morning the papers were filled with their patriotic utterances, advising all white men to arm and be ready to defend themselves. They failed to tell them that the negroes were already frightened out of their wits, and were affirming that they had not done anything and would not think of such things as they were accused of, and had already made up their minds that they were not going anywhere about the polls on election day. Nevertheless, the call was made for another mass meeting for the next night, with hand bills distributed all over the town, saying that it was expected that every white man would be present to prepare to protect his family. With big headlines in all the papers, every white man was requested to be present and it was stated that there would be a meeting each night until all had joined and thoroughly organized. When the hour for the meeting arrived, they were there and the three original plotters had several fiery orators to help inject their fire upon the audience. It was claimed that the inward fire was free on most any corner, as these were the times before prohibition, and the dispensers of the liquor are like special interests, they can always be expected on the winning side.

These meetings went on nightly in the main building, and daily on the street corners, as nothing else was doing, and were apt to be near some bar, whose owner was one of the leading boys; when they had the town bubbling over with excitement, they had put out the word that the negroes had planned to burn the town, women and children included, and those who had refused to attach their names to the pledge that was drawn up by the plotters, were waited upon

and told they had to join. Many of the good people were marched from their homes, some by committees and taken to headquarters, and told to sign. Those that did not were notified that they must leave the city. It was advised that the big six of the Republican leaders be dealt with, if necessary, as there were plenty of ropes in the city.

The matter looked serious, and the chairman of the board of audit and finance was asked to go and see the other two of his committee, who were Democrats, and directors in their bank, and asked them to approve of the naming of one hundred men of the town to act as policemen in order that the city might be properly guarded on account of such bitter feeling against the administration, and as they had the money in the city's treasury to spare, it was their duty to do so, and as the mayor had withdrawn his down town negro policemen, and was one of the big six, who had heard of the rope so repeatedly, he was like Brer Rabbit, he was laying low. The two Democrats on the board of audit and finance, especially the bank officer, said that they did not have any money to waste, he having allied himself with the boys, knowing it would have interfered with already arranged plans to do otherwise.

About this time, Bennie having refused to be a party to what was going on, he told those who came to wait on him and have him sign up that no man in the city would shoulder his gun quicker than he would, if he saw that the negroes intended to rise against the white people, and told them that the negroes were so badly frightened already that they were begging the white people to please protect them from the drunken Red Shirts that were terrifying everybody they could and affirming also that they would not attempt to vote, but that had no effect on those who were doing the leading. Anonymous letters began to come to Bennie in nearly every mail, with coffins, skulls, etc., drawn on them, advising him to leave at once or join the Red Shirt club. A few real nice letters came to him praising him for his noble work and worth

he had been to all the leading enterprises, but for the sake of his family, wife and young children alone he ought to join, as his character and business would be ruined if he did not join.

This went on for some weeks and finally a committee of three of the leaders, one being an elder in a prominent church of the city, the other two being churchmen and prominent in the old administration, went into his office, saying that they were sent by the club to get him to come and join them, that about all the rest had done so, and they knew there was no better man in the town than he was, and they were authorized to say to him that if he would come and join the club, he could have the mayor's place or be State Senator or anything else that he might want. They were told that he wanted no office of any kind, as he had taken the place of alderman with no pay only as a matter of duty, in trying to protect the city's interest, and while he had seen that his service was not appreciated by those he was serving, yet their interest had been well taken care of, and many reforms had been attempted, some of which were defeated by the Democrats who were interested in their personal affairs more than they were in those of the people. He further said that he was not for sale, and there were neither offices nor money enough to keep him from doing his duty as he saw it. They soon left, with oaths and threats of what would happen to him for his refusal to join.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, they came again, walking into his place of business and stating that they were sent back by the committee to get his ultimatum, and to notify him that he would either have to join their Red Shirt organization or leave the city, or his life would be in his own hands; besides, there was an arrangement already to ruin his business (which had taken years to build up and which was paying him ten to twelve thousand dollars a year or more net) if he did not join. In the meantime they were acting as drunken hoodlums, some cursing and swearing. When he

could not stand their epithets any longer, he walked from behind his desk to an open space in his store, and told them that he could whip all three of them, if they would come on, that they were nothing more than an intimidating mob, and they could go and tell their Red Shirt mob that they could send their Red Shirt, drunken butchers to kill him any time, as that is what they intimated, but to say to them that he had not done anything to leave the town for, only tried to protect its interest, and when they sent their mob to run him out of town or butcher him, to tell them that a dozen or twenty-five would go with him to another world, and that if he did nothing else his life would not have been in vain.

They left, going up the street to where a large crowd had gathered near a place where there was plenty to drink, as well as to eat. When the three wild, courageous committee walked up, the first question asked was: "What did you do with ———?" The answer was: "Not a d——— thing." One of the most patriotic of the group, who had been seeking for an office these many years to get something to support him without work to lighten the burden of his wife, and who was declared later by the mob to be mayor, remarked that a shot gun could bring him down; but his life ended in sadness.

Next morning, by the time Bennie got to his store to open it, as they had coerced about all his help to leave him, he saw standing at his door a man who had been his friend, but who was like all the other friends who had not been embittered against him—afraid to be seen talking with him, and when he was met by them on the street, rather than be seen speaking, they would go in another direction for fear that they would be shot down and killed, so they afterwards told him. When the store door was opened, his friend asked to go back into the back of the store, so no one would see him, and this friend being under the greatest excitement, commenced to beg him to leave the city, as he was satisfied

that he would be killed, that the leaders were doing everything in their power, he said, to have him put out of the way in some way. He was told that his hands and conscience were clean, and his wife and little family seemed to be the only friends who were willing to stand and die with him, but he put his trust in his God who had always been his helper in time of need, and had asked on his knees, during these trials that he was going through, that if it was the right thing for him to do, to put it into his heart and mind to join with them, but further asked to keep his hands and influence from being the cause of shedding innocent blood and to lead him to do the right thing in His sight, and that there would be no stain left upon him or his family. After becoming thoroughly convinced that there would be innocent people killed, if they were negroes, (they, too, were of God's creatures the same as all other races), he then became thoroughly resigned to be killed, but felt it his duty to protect himself as best he could, and had no more dread of the mob than if they never had been in existence.

In the meantime, he had one hundred shells loaded with buck shot, and had bought another pistol, and sent for his extra gun on the farm. The news no doubt was out about his shells being loaded, as he had them loaded at one of the hardware stores, as these were about the only busy people in the city, except the fire water distributors.

The following night, after his excited friend had begged him to leave before he was killed, there was another big rally at headquarters, where they had some of the preachers of the city, all called on to speak. One pompous, beaver-diked specimen of their number got up and made one of the bitterest talks, urging the boys on. He was one of their first recruits, and his name always had big headlines in the papers. He stated that he had been in one riot South, before he came here, and was itching to get in another one, as they killed nine, and he was ready at any time. He finished with great cheers, the paper said. The next speaker to arise

was a brother of one of the committeemen that waited on Bennie twice the day before; when he refused to obey orders, the speaker said, the river was near his place, and he should be dealt with.

It was said that all of the speech making was received with great ovation, except when the business man insinuated that Bennie's place was near the river and should be dealt with. Then one could have heard a pin drop on the floor, but no one volunteered to make the move. The next speaker was a leading talker in his church, but became almost a ward before he died. When he arose, after the fiery speech in which the river was said to be so close, the fiery old church talker started by introducing an old horse pistol, and telling his enthusiastic hearers that it was his liver regulator, and was the medicine to use.

The next night when Bennie went home, his two little daughters, one seven and the other nine years old, began to cry and beg their father not to send them to school any more, that those pale faced children, who no doubt had eaten rations contributed by Bennie by the dray loads to the unemployed months before, who claimed that they were suffering, were always saying to them that they ought not be allowed to come to school there, but ought to go to the negro school, and his wife was always in tears when he left the home, expecting that she would not see him alive again. After supper was over, she began crying, telling that her mother was worried almost to death, and had come in the back way that evening to persuade her to get him to go out of the town, that their friends were awfully worried, and some of them were coming in to see her all the time, to get her son-in-law to leave, at least until after the election. When she finished telling the sad news, which was the only kind they had for months, she said: "If you are going to stay here, I will load the guns as fast as you can shoot them." Her experience on the farm, shooting snakes, targets, etc., had taught her how to handle a gun. The little eleven year old

boy, who was sitting at the table with his hands holding his head, looked up and said: "Papa, my little gun that you bought me will kill anything, if you are not too far from it, and if the mob comes here to take you out and kill you at night, like they say they are going to do, I'm going to shoot as long as you do."

A few nights afterwards, about midnight, there could be heard coming up the brick sidewalk, apparently trying to walk lightly, quite a number of persons. The wife whispered that the sidewalks were full. They were both up by the time the mob reached the iron gate, which was kept shut. As soon as they were heard on the pavement that led from the gate to the house, Bennie and his wife, both with guns in their hands, were going down the stairway to give them the long-looked-for reception. When they were about half way down, the butt of his gun struck one of the baluster supports with such force that it could be heard all over the house, as well as out in the yard. Before he could get to the door, which had glass panes on both sides which he expected to shoot through, the mob broke in a run, some jumping over the sharp iron pailings, and were running down the street like a drove of wild mules, in every direction. Some of them told about it later on, and said they knew what they would have gotten had they not run, but they said that was the last crowd that could be persuaded to wait on him day or night.

A few days previously there had appeared in one of the morning papers the most scurrilous and damnable lie that was ever hatched up against any respectable person, expecting it to kill any influence that Bennie had in the State, and among his trade elsewhere, claiming that he was advocating social equality between the whites and the negroes, which meant that he wanted white women to marry negro men. The State was afire over the Simmons Red Shirt issue already, and when a rival competitor's salesman would see any goods with his name printed on them the first thing the salesman

would say to the storekeeper would be: "Do you buy your goods from a man who is preaching social equality, advocating your daughters marrying negroes?" "Well, he doesn't, does he?" "Yes." "Well, I will never trade another dollar with him again." This went all over the country, until all that was possible to be poisoned was done so.

The article was published in the leading daily, with an anonymous name as authority, but it had created a townful of talk. All the people that had any sense of honor, knew it was false, but some who knew him better pretended to believe it and would say: "Well, his influence is dead now; he can say what he pleases, and no one will believe him, and none of the papers will publish anything that he says or writes, he is done for. No doubt he is sorry now that he did not join our club, which would have saved him and his family all the humiliation that has befallen them."

The editor refused at first to give the name of the author, saying: "You know that it is politics," and told him not to notice it. When pressed for an answer, his reply was that the man was a friend of Bennie's and he had promised not to tell who he was. Bennie then told the editor that he would hold him personally responsible, that he knew that he could get no redress by going to law, but whoever put the article in the paper would be punished if it was the last act of his life, and the man that would print such an outrage was no better than the scoundrel that had it printed, and then and there he demanded to know its author. When he realized what was up, he told him, but begged him not to notice it as everybody knew that there was no truth in the article. When he was told who gave the editor the article, Bennie was surprised to learn that it was his envious neighbor, after he had been his only friend on the square, and had tried to act the peacemaker for ten years, taking more and having his family do the same, than he should have done, but did it for peace.

There was not much sleep that night, as all he could do was to do like some of the neighbors had threatened to do, going to his home if it was night, and settle with him. The first thing next morning was to go out about six o'clock to his place of business, where he had discharged all of his former hands, which were negroes and had given their places to the Red Shirt brigade, who were doing the political trick so well for them. When he got to his place of business, he went in and called for Mr. ——— on the inside of his office. No sooner than the anonymous letter writer saw who it was, he jumped up from his desk, so glad to see him and asked him to sit down as he wanted to talk with him. He then said, "I am so glad that you came out; let me tell you about that article. I told an attorney something but not anything like what he wrote." Bennie asked that they go on the outside, where they could be alone. When they had gotten a few yards from the office, the first word that was spoken was: "What kind of an outrageous lie was that you had published?" With that the lick went with the question, and he commenced to beg, saying that he did not do it, but the attorney who was one of the three to make the first call for the mass meeting, and one that helped lead the three aldermen away to keep them from qualifying. But the licks were being driven with all the power that an outraged person could command, whose wrought feelings gave renewed strength. When the author found that his resistance amounted to nothing, he began at the top of his voice to holler "Murder, come, come, for G—— sake, come!" The first one to see and to run to his assistance was a drayman weighing two hundred pounds or more. When he came sailing up, the anonymous writer missed that lick, which went to the big drayman, taking him on the side of his face and ear, who was then told that if he moved another inch toward him, he would shoot him full of holes. The job went on, only instead of one hollering for help, there were two. The drayman thought that his boss would be

killed, so he began jumping up and down, hollering at the top of his voice, which caused the other thirty-odd Red Shirters to hear, as the noise of the mill had kept them from hearing the calls and cries of murder. Each one of the rescuers came with a board, slab, or scantling in their hands, so heavy it was all they could do to raise them, but the licks went on until the recruits came within striking distance, when they were told to halt, which they all did to a man. Bennie with his pistol and plenty of balls kept his hands on them and told them that the first one that attempted to come a step nearer, he would blow their brains out. When they had come to a stand, he then walked sideways back to the gate; all the time the trouble-maker was begging the new army to kill him, kill him, but they only kept their timbers up in the air. On reaching the gate and street, he stopped to tell his supposed neighbor how mean and little he was, and what he and his family had taken in order to have peace, and that he had been his only friend on the square. The trouble-maker had ventured up and was leaning on the gate post; Bennie decided that he would give him one more punch, but he jumped back so far that the lick merely glazed him. When he jumped back, all of his protectors jumped back with him, some of their fighting arms so heavy the weight of them liked to have carried some of them on their backs.

About this time a young man came sailing by in his buggy. Bennie asked if he could ride down town with him; he was told to get up, and in twenty minutes, he was at the magistrate's office, submitted his case, and paid the cost and got a receipt. About four o'clock, p. m., an officer came with a warrant, but when he was shown that the case was submitted, he said that he was too late.

When the news became circulated over the city of what had happened, those who knew Bennie said that they did not blame him, and instead of gaining popularity, the letter writer finally lost about all the little he had. His partner in

the business was one of the Big Six that caused the rope to be mentioned, and having had one of the large businesses of the city, he was favored by giving him thirty days to settle everything and go back North. Having the greater part of the money in the business, and being no fool, to the surprise of his partner (who joined so readily with the plotters), he called about three hundred of his friends and active workers of the Red Shirts to his house one night for a conference. To their surprise, they found that the table was loaded down with all that one's appetite could call for; besides, the sideboard was filled with anything the thirsty could think of, with help to serve each guest his particular fancy. After the glasses had been filled two or three times and all made happy, he told his guests that he had something still to surprise them with, that he had decided to resign as county commissioner and its chairman and join the Democratic party, and it was said that his partner was not there either. Cheer after cheer went up, as the glasses were refilled, which continued until the early hours of the morning, and all of a sudden he became a big man of the party; this all in one night, and the papers with their great headlines rejoiced and were exceedingly glad. The order of this dismissal and request to leave the city was revoked, but the trouble maker had to take his bed the day that his guests went to his place to see him and was in the doctor's care for two weeks. The Doctor, who was Bennie's also, confided in him that his old neighbor was in such bad shape that he had to go to bed and remain for two weeks, then to the mountains for over two months. When he returned the election was all over, and he missed his vote after so strenuously turning the rascals out, but "hubby" is not always to blame for everything if he is not capable of thinking for himself. The election came and the State went Democratic, but they could not wait for the city election, and on the third morning after the State election, when it was as quiet as a Sunday morning everyone thinking that it was the quietest election that

had ever been held in the old town, as it was noted far and near as a town where factional fights in their own party were waged with all the feeling and bitterness that could be thought of, and was at its height and glory during the campaign, but there had been only a one sided campaign during the three months having everything in their own hands, negroes frightened into a pitiful condition, asking their white friends not to let them be hurt, and that they were not going to the ballot box. The politicians, feeling so elated over the great victory of the State, the Red Shirt campaign had won, they who were hungry and thirsty after office, could not wait several months for the city election, and the third morning after the election, some of the leaders decided to run out of the city or kill the yellow rascal who had been running a little newspaper that printed an article that was outrageous and false concerning white women.

In the meantime all the partisan press of the State made great capital out of it against the Populists and Republicans, and caused thousands of them to believe that it was time for a change. But when they went down to deal with the traitor, to kill him if necessary, the crowd being armed with guns, being several hundred of them, they seemed to have forgotten that it was printed in the leading paper of the city, eleven days before, that this yellow negro editor was then in Asbury Park, N. J., having fled from town for fear of being injured or killed; but as the leaders must have forgotten it, and to make good all the terrible mismanagement of the city administration, in having gotten all the Democrats, women and children to believe all that was printed and said was true, and then some more, they ran no risks, as far as sentiment was concerned, as well as no danger in killing this little yellow traitor. After getting where he lived, and finding no one there, and that there had been no one there for over ten days, they set fire to the building, burning it and the printing press up together; but the excitement was on, and back uptown they came, with excitement growing all the while,

with more joining in with them, with guns, it being their intention of protecting the town; and having started out to have some fun, they were like Katy Walker was, when wanting to wait at the wedding of a cousin, and being persuaded not to do so, as everything was already arranged, her reply was that she had come there prepared to wait and she be d— to h— if she wasn't going to wait.

They had their fun, but it must be too sad for those who are still living now to make any pretensions to believe in the only true and living God to be haunted by the innocent negroes that were helpless and begging for mercy, when the influence of the better people seemd to have been dead to usefulness during these momentous times, where prejudices were substituted for reason and justice.

Scores and scores of good men thoughtlessly were tempted by the politician that afterwards told Bennie they wished many times since that they had the courage he did; if so, they would have had no part in it and would have no stain on their hands or minds.

When the high-hat preacher, with the spike-tailed coat and with gun on his shoulder, went out hunting blackbirds, it was not much of a surprise to see others not so prominent in church affairs acting as he did. To the credit of those churches whose preachers so far forgot their sacred duty to their God that they professed to serve, they were soon hunting for another pulpit, and not one of them remained but a few months after disgracing their calling. But God works in a mysterious way. One who claims to have kept an account of the unnatural deaths of some of those who were the most active and unmerciful, claimed that there were eighty of them who went to an untimely death before the Judgment bar in less than two years, and many since then have gone to the Judgment seat.

There were as good people in the city as could be found anywhere, but many of them lent their influence to the plotters, never thinking, no doubt, that it would terminate as it

did. But whom the gods would destroy, they first deceive. When people get wrought up over anything, whether true or false, they become like frightened wild horses and cattle—they will trample over each other in frenzy. It is like striking a match to an old field of broomstraw on a windy day—once it is started, it is soon out of control; and many must have seen it that way before they were called to see about it. As many species of trees are lifeless after the fury of the fire has swept through them, so many consciences are endangered by the burning fire of hate, which is here penned as a warning for those who let it get control of them.

HATE

Hate is a dangerous word,
It dwarfs the mind and shrivels the soul,
Its thoughts are fearful to behold;
If you indulge in it you will lose your soul.

It is Satan's most cunning sword:
With it he reaches the world over,
And every man he can induce to accept,
He then has added another to his set.

Beware, then, of that fearful word,
For it is one that is hard to curb.
It destroys the mind, impoverishes the soul,
And encourages Satan to continue on the go.

Its business with others is to hinder
Any good that might be accomplished;
It then is in its glory,
But its ending is always a sad story.

See the man whose mind it dwarfs;
For the good of the world he is lost.
The seed he has sown
Will deprive him of the most humble throne.

CHAPTER XI

THE COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS

There is always a way to manage by law, and correct the evils, when it is rightly gone after; but the better people stand back when they ought to come to the front, as it is as much their duty in serving the Lord as in their various churches, for the politicians are often churchmen and often take advantage of being a church member; that being true, he ought to be dealt with in his political crookedness as quickly as if he stole his neighbor's horse.

There were many who were prosperous before, that became dependents before they died; but God lets many prosper while they remain here, but they have to go before Him in rags and poverty, unless they have made amends for the things that He has forbidden them against.

When they came back from running out or killing the negro that said such mean things in the paper, and who was running the paper without negro subscribers or white Republicans, they went to shooting, and declared the city under martial law, and proceeded to the city's building and elected the brave leader, who led the boys to go and kill the negro editor, as mayor, to the great surprise, it was said, of the old ex-fox mayor, who was one of the three to call the first public meeting to turn the rascals out. They also appointed men for all the city offices, except one alderman, whose resignation was not sent in until about ten days later, when he saw that they wanted it all. They only appointed one of the three original leaders to an office, he being appointed city attorney, which was no doubt his apple from the beginning. At the first election, a few months afterwards, he was defeated, but it did not discourage him, for he ran regularly for about ten or twelve years in the primaries and conventions in his party. Having never gotten any nearer than

wanting something during these long years, he afterwards began running in the Republican party for places the old party bosses knew they could not get, else they would have taken it themselves. To hold the voters together, they would flatter him by letting him run, and when he had about run out, he had to depend upon the astute popularity of those who had some sympathy for a man who seemed to have the heavy hand of misfortune against him, but his partners in the first call, their lives ended too sad to dwell upon.

When the wires flashed the news all over the country that the negroes were killing white people in a regular race war, calls came for the Governor to send help to quell the riot and help the light infantry, who were prepared to settle matters, and could have done so, if desired, in short order. When the companies arrived on the field, they claimed that they saw no negroes to shoot, and those that they ran across were so frightened that they were to be pitied. The reporters who represented the big New York and other dailies were carefully looked after on their arrival at the depot. Bennie had told many of those who pretended to be so frightened that if it became necessary, to give him one hundred men and he would put any negroes to flight that pretended to do any mischief. He was told months afterwards by one of his old friends, who knew what Bennie said was true, but it was politics he said they were playing, he claimed, to carry the election.

As the telegraph company was interested, as their charges had been cut forty per cent, as well as the railroad and telephone charges, and every man from them could be seen on the job, and the club was the most secluded place to tell the reporters of all the heroic deeds, many of them remained for several days, not seen only by those who had them in charge, and it was said that there was no need of water at the club, except for bathing purposes. In consequence, there were lots of ghost stories, hobgoblins, and anything else necessary to make up a newsy story that was flashed all over the country.

About this time Tom Dixon came into fame so completely that he forgot the God that he first pretended to worship, in order to worship the one that gave him so much fame while here on earth, along with the glittering gold, and before his first book was published (certain portions of it were given to the press) he was met face to face by an earnest man, who told him of certain things that he had published which were entirely erroneous and were calculated to bring great shame upon the city and do great harm throughout the country in the end, as the circumstances were entirely different from what he had printed, and he felt that it was his duty to tell him the real facts in some of the particular matters that they were discussing. His reply, after hearing what was told him, was that he knew that it was all politics and bunk, yet he did not change any of his wild lies, as he found they would sell his book. What will be his excuse when soon he will have to meet the honest Judge, when he finds that he has led thousands by the little word "hate" to destruction?

The Red Shirt campaign, from that year, spread until it has reached all over the United States. Where there are no negroes, the ones of that training mob each other when they see fit. Many of the pulpits seem to act as though it was none of their business; then wonder why the old church is losing the influence it once had, when stealing was treated as stealing, and murder and other crimes were treated by God-fearing people as such.

After ten days of strenuous watching and waiting, with hundreds of the citizens, some through fear, and others because they were ordered, the city became safe enough to let the visiting companies go home, but many of them said that they greatly regretted doing so, as they had had the times of their lives. The reporters could say the same, but one of the New York reporters happened to step aside, and picked up an inkling from one of the boys of how the game was being played, and when he went back to New York he wrote an

article giving a good many of the facts as they really were, and the politicians have never forgiven that paper, from that day to this.

To pay the ten days expenses, after spending the thousands they found in the treasury, they began to borrow, until the tax rate is from two to three times higher than it was when they found it, and the valuation of the property has been increased two to three times. During the last few years there has been much improvement in the old city, yet there is too much expense, and the expenses must be reduced, if owners are to continue to own their property.

When the public temperament was thought modified, though prejudices were still steeped and running over in many of the active ones, Bennie went about to try to get together the business that was once so fair and promising, but he found that the plotters had and were still putting in their nefarious work against him all over the territory in which he sold goods. They could get the business probably themselves, and obey orders at the same time, and having to go down and open the store after all his clerks were beguiled away from him, with the "grip" on him he became feeble and a deep cold fell upon his lungs that lasted him for years. At the same time, when sending his men out later on the road, they would come back with not an order on their books, saying to him they had never seen or heard of a man so belied in all their lives. When he quit trading, many who could pay would not, and he not only lost one of the best businesses, but the greater portion of what was owing him, as he saw there was no use to go before a court, as they had so cruelly poisoned the minds of the people against him.

He then started a new business that none of his competitors were in. He soon began to make money as before, as well as to try to forget and forgive those whom God will settle with. When those up North, as well as some in the city, saw that the new business was doing well, especially after they learned that he was clearing a thousand dollars

per month above expenses, they commenced to come in from the North and elsewhere, trying to divide the trade with him, but they soon found that they could not get the business unless they paid more than the price he was paying. As they raised the price in order to turn the business their way, so would he have to raise, and it was not long before the new competitors were paying more than they were getting, besides losing the trade, but as Bennie was under a signed contract to deliver so much each month at a given price, so were his competitors, and he soon began losing about the same amount each month as his profits were at first. When the wild-cat firms had gotten all the advancements from the banks and timber factors North, they began to fail. The smallest of the failures was one of Bennie's clerks during the Red Shirt campaign, and amounted to over $20,000; the next failure was for $65,000; the next, $77,500; the next, $400,000.

While all this unfair competition was going on, Bennie was fulfilling his obligations each month, which took all that he had in his corporation; and though he was not legally responsible for any more, yet to protect his creditors he sold nearly two thousand acres of land and fulfilled his obligations to the letter, winning thanks from those who knew the great sacrifice that he had made. He was often told that they said in New York and Boston and elsewhere that there was one honest man down in the tide region, if there were lots of crooks.

In the meantime he had been offered three government positions, including the postoffice, through the friendship and sympathy of the two Senators whom he had not sought to elect. He refused all of them. Later, there came up a big fight for the collector of customs, with six avowed candidates. One was the ex-Governor, one the wealthiest man in the old city, and the balance long-experienced office-getters. Having no thought or desire to ask for any place, Bennie was continually being approached by some of his friends, who could be seen then talking to him, insisting that he ask

for the place. They proposed to take a petition around to his friends, who it was said would be glad to sign it. To his surprise, a great many of those that he had no idea of seeing their names, among the business men, were on it. The petition was virtually out of his hands, and as soon as it became known they began sending telegrams and letters to the President. He saw one of the telegrams, which cost about twelve dollars to send. On offering to reimburse the sender, it was refused, notwithstanding he did all he could to elect Bryan, and it was known to the President, but after a month of strenuous fighting, put up by his opponents, he was appointed by President Roosevelt, after it had been offered to the ex-Governor by two Senators. The wife of one of the Senators contended that the young man from the old city had to have the place, and while both Senators wanted him to have it, yet, to pacify the ex-Governor, who was asking for another place, they offered it to him. When offered, it was accepted, and things changed and changed.

When the young man of the old town finally worked his way through policemen, detectives, and doorkeepers until he got to the inner door, where the old colored man, who had been there since Lincoln, but finding him easy to get acquainted with, he made a plan with him to speak to the secretary to the President, Mr. Loeb, but while waiting for his turn, he found that the old man was raised near where his new acquaintance was. That made things look easy; but when he finally said that he was once whipped in the old town by a patroller of the same name as the new guest, and had been wanting to see him for a long time in order to get even with him, things began not to look so bright. When he told the old inner doorkeeper that his father was in the service, and had left the old town years before, besides he did not allow his own foreman or overseer to whip his slaves, nor any one else, and that they were cared for like the family, also that the other family were no relation of his, the old doorkeeper began to feel more kindly, and it was not long

before he could see the secretary to the President. The door was soon opened; the Secretary was pointed out to him, as the new guest had already sent in a slip with his name on it, with the message that he just wanted to shake his hand. He was met and cordially received, as he was a prince of a man.

After a few minutes of talking, both standing, the Secretary was told that there was a petition gotten up by some of his friends in the old town, asking for his appointment as collector, and was asked if he would mail it from his hotel—would he see that the President got it? The reply was, "Certainly; it will be a pleasure to do so." After thanking him and starting out, he was asked if he had ever met the President. He was told no. The Secretary then said, "Wait a few minutes; he will soon be out, and I will be glad to present you to him." Bennie thanked him again, and in less than five minutes the President came from his private room, speaking to some of the Senators that were waiting near his door, and when he reached the Secretary he was taken over to where Bennie was. The Secretary introduced them, telling the President that Mr.—— had a petition from quite a number of citizens in North Carolina, in the old city, that he wanted him to consider. He said that he would consider it with pleasure and to send it up any time.

The meeting, after getting in, turned out to be real pleasant, as well as hopeful, though it was said by all at the capital that no one could get an interview with the President without a Senator or Representative or other prominent person; but, having overcome all of that, and the cordial reception just received, he hastened to his hotel, found the stenographer, writing first what he wanted to say. When copied, it filled more than two sheets of foolscap paper, and every word meant something. At four o'clock p. m. it and the petition were put in the postoffice. By eight-thirty he had received an answer, saying, "Come up next morning." By eight-thirty a. m. he was back at the White House, talking to the newly acquainted doorkeeper, who no doubt still re-

membered that his new acquaintance's name was the same as the one that he had been wanting to meet, but it was soon forgotten and was glad to know his new North Carolina friend, as both came from the same State, and near adjoining counties.

When the princely Secretary saw who it was, he gave the same kindly welcome, and was told to call that afternoon, but in the meantime the good Senator's wife was harassing him so, he said, he was not able to sleep the night before, telling him what was what. The other Senator had taken a flying trip to New York to catch the ex-Governor, to persuade him to decline the offer, but he was told no—he had it and was going to keep it; but the next morning the Senators were sent for by the President, and were told that he had decided to take the collectorship in hand and would decide that matter to suit himself.

In the meantime, calling one of the secretaries and asking for a piece of paper, he wrote the name of the supposed intruder to the White House, and requested that it be sent over to the Senate. When the news was flashed all over the capital city and country, it was the least expected, as those who were stopping at the same hotel, although sympathizing with him, were remarking to one another that the poor fellow had better be home, saving his expenses, as they would not give two cents for his chance. Even the old fox, the ex-mayor, when his plotting did not give him the mayor's place, as he expected, went to Washington with some of his friends, trying to get the collector's place, willing to turn the old town bottom side up, politically, if the place was thrown on him; but a Republican who was for Bryan, and whom the Democrats refused to let be one of the eleven electors, heard him telling what he could do if he could get the place. No sooner than he finished, this tall mountaineer, with his keen, sparkling eyes, with the courage of a lion, walked up to him, pointed his finger at his face and began to pile up epithets upon him that could not be published, telling him that his

blood-stained hands were not yet dry, and that if he was there twelve hours longer he would be arrested for the offense he had committed, and that was the last seen of him at the capital. Consequently, there was one less applicant for the little-paying office, though much-sought one, the salary having been cut from four thousand five hundred by the Democrats just before they went out under Cleveland, to one thousand dollars and two and one-half per cent commission on all duties collected on imported goods. As the Gorman and Wilson tariff took off most all the tariff that came through that port, there were but little fees; and salary and fees, during the first year of Bennie's administration, was only thirteen hundred dollars; but the office was then sought more for honor than emolument—that is, by honest men. In this case it was sought not only for the honor, but to show the plotters that they could not hoodwink the government if they could the inhabitants of the small city.

When the new collector took charge, the affairs were conducted so very differently from the way that he had always conducted his private business, that it seemed a mystery how the government put up with the sleepy go-easy way of allowing it to be run, but after it was learned that the collector of customs in most places, was moving along in the same way waiting for the first of the month, with no idea of letting up on any of the requisitions, for all that they could get to be stored away, to be wasted, etc. However, there was a change; gradually the old Rip Van Winkles were not comfortable long, one in one chair, and one in the other, keeping time, making music by the bow and time that they would keep one with another, but something was soon found for them to do, and the inspector did the guaging as well as to sign his daily reports, and all the extra expense was cut off, when it was found not needed, and there was soon a general cleaning up, all through, but as it is hard to teach people things that they do not want to learn, they were gradually weeded out, and new up-to-date men were received

into the office, who were willing and anxious to learn, and be trained by the new collector, who knew no man except to treat him right, no more, no less, from the richest to the poorest, and to spare no means, to give all who had business through the office all the help that they could.

It was not many years before the office was praised, not only by the local men, who had continuous business with it, but masters and sailors, from everywhere over the country, the convenience of the shippers and the captains were considered, and when they wanted to clear, there would be some one in the office, to sign the papers. Formerly the old Rip Van Winkles would not move before nine in the morning, and close at four, and if they felt like accommodating any of the masters or shippers, they would consider they were doing a special favor.

When the captains and sailors of any of the vessels had any differences there were always constables and runners to get them to take their case to trial justices, no doubt the fees being divided with them, but after finding some one in the collector's office so often, collecting money from the master or his crew, after finding out their method, the collector, as custodian, had the right to have such matters brought before him, which he did from then on, for over ten years, with his saving of thousands of dollars to the master and his sailors, with not one cent in the custodian's pocket, as there were no fees attached to that office. During this period, every single case, except one, was amicably settled, though many times, when coming in the office, they had to be guarded from injuring each other, often threatening each other's lives. After the case was heard by the custodian, they would often go out locked arms, or on each other's shoulders, better friends than ever.

The case that would not be settled by one of the sailors, claiming that he was the head of one of the New York unions, and after rejecting the decision of the custodian, he appealed his case to Washington, D. C. There the court

held with the custodian, and his attorney's fees were for nought, and he had to come back and take the money awarded him by the custodian.

When the authorities at Washington saw that the office was run on a business basis, and the receipts were climbing up each year through the energy of the collector, by getting the importers to have their goods to come to their own port for the duty to be paid instead of New York, Baltimore, and other points, when it was turned through the gateway, (as he named it) of their own port, something the importer had not thought of, nor did not think it could be done, as many said it could not. There was no further attempt to have the main collector's office, for the State, to be moved to New Bern, by the one who had taught that where there were more negro voters, whether they voted or not, the greater the Democratic majority was, and the same stands against those who vote against the machine today, though all are white people. When the receipts began to increase so rapidly, and the collector having seen all the while the need of a new custom building, as the repairs on it each year seemed to be useless, notwithstanding the inspectors of public building, whose duty it was to look after them, said that Uncle Sam wanted his money spent that way.

The collector, believing it a perfect waste, began to take the matter up with the Secretary of the Treasury, and finally prevailed upon him and his First Assistant Secretary, Mr. Winthrop, to send down an architect to inspect the building, and see if it was worth repairing, and if he saw proper to condemn the old building, to do so, and provide a plan for a new one. The special architect was sent, and he turned out to be a friend, and one who was raised in the adjoining county from the collector, whose family the collector had known from boyhood. For one week he remained, and was shown every crack and ugly spot inside of the old building that could be seen, and when he was not busy, he was taken care of in an agreeable manner while he was

in the city. When he left, he expressed his appreciation and said that he would make an early report, with recommendations for a new customs building.

The collector had spoken to many of the business men about the new building, and many agreed with him, thinking that there ought to be a new one by all means, as the old trap was over a hundred years old, inadequate in all respects, while others would say that as it had been there about one hundred years and they had gotten along very well with it, they thought it good enough for many more years. However, that did not dampen the collector's zeal for something in keeping with other cities whose export and imports did not equal that of the old city, and he decided to get the chamber of commerce, of which he was an active member, to indorse the recommendation for a new building. To his surprise, some of them, as he saw it, still had it in for him and were against anything that he might get credit for. When he read the resolutions, as coming from the chamber of commerce to Congress, asking for five hundred and fifty thousand dollars for a new building, there were six speeches made, five against the appropriation and only one for it, the collector himself. After listening to each of the wise and various remarks, his patience was exhausted and he got up and said: "Men, for G—— sake, if you are not willing to help me do something for your town, hold your hands down, and I will do it myself."

The president of the largest bank in the city got up and said, "I move that the collector be let alone, and given a free hand to get it if he can." This was the beginning of six years of fight that kept him busy a great portion of the time, when not attending to his work, going to Washington dozens of times, paying his own expenses, as well as for all telegrams during those strenuous times, using every effort to secure the six hundred thousand dollars appropriation for the new building, which he got in the end,

working almost alone, certainly, with few exceptions, without help from those who should have taken more interest in it.

In the meantime, he had gained the friendship of Secretary Hillis, who was then Secretary of the Treasury, who had begun to appreciate the work of the collector, stating to the committee that the collector would not ask for anything that was not needed. After the first three and one half years, they had gotten five hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and were very much elated. The collector was told by the secretary that Congress adjourned that night, and it was all fixed, but to be certain the secretary, in the presence of the collector in his office, called up each of the appropriation committee and all said that it would go through at the closing session that night, as it had been unanimously agreed upon.

The collector saw that it was unnecessary to remain over another day, and told the secretary that he would go home, which was agreed, but on his way home next morning, he picked up a paper, and saw that just before adjournment that the appropriation had been cut to three hundred thousand dollars by the influence of some one who did not care to let it be known. On reaching home, the collector was complimented, and advised not to try any further, but as soon as Congress convened in the fall, the Senator, who had tried to abolish the customs service in the old city, and move it to his town, introduced a bill in the Senate, asking for an appropriation of three hundred thousand dollars for a new customs building in his own town, that had not more than nine to eleven feet of water available. The collector had fox hunted when a boy, running them mostly moonlight nights, and he had then learned there were some cunning old foxes that could fool the dog every time, often by back tracking, then running fences, running bent trees, high logs, etc., and he had observed many of the fox's tricks, which are used to this day by some of our representatives

to fool their followers. No sooner than the collector saw the bill for a new appropriation had been introduced by the old fox, for three hundred thousand dollars for a customs house at New Bern, he got in touch with the treasurer, Mr. Hillis, whose heart had gotten in the work, and got his assurance of help; he then went to the other Senator, who promised to help get it back the first opportunity, also to the Congressman for that district, with some of the other Congressmen from the State, who had helped in the matter, and it was agreed with the Congressman who represented the old city that they would ask for three hundred thousand dollars more, the same the old fox had, for his town. The collector, having gone to Washington so often after his Congressman having introduced the bill, going before the appropriation committee, having no committee with him from the same town, but there being large delegations from many of the cities of the country, to go before the appropriation committee when they met, to make it appear that he was not alone the collector would sit in the midst of some of the large delegations from Oklahoma or from some other state, and when the opportunity presented itself, he would speak for the entire committee from his city. The additional three hundred thousand dollars was finally secured, after three years more of strenuous work, making in all six hundred thousand dollars, and as Uncle Joe Cannon, who was the boss of the appropriation committee, and had put his foot down on any big appropriations, but being like the old colored inner door-keeper at the White House, a kind of friendship existed between the collector and the old statesman, as both felt the tie that binds all North Carolinians wherever they are found, and after the appropriation had passed, he remarked, with cigar in mouth, that it was the largest appropriation that had ever been gotten through Congress, since he had been there, by any single man.

Soon after this, the plans for the new building were drawn, with a roof garden on top, at the earnest request of the

collector, where the band of the cutter could go up by elevator, as well as for others to attend the various entertainments, where the musicians could make music for the delight of the people, with parks and iron benches and cement walks for the women and children to rest on while enjoying the music. This suggestion of the roof garden for the young cutter boys to play, came by suggestion from the captain of the cutter, as he said that it would enable him to keep a better class of boys. Having gotten the use of the cutter, every time it had been suggested by the collector, for the various entertainments of the various organizations, farmers, etc., as well as having gotten it to entertain President Taft, and the invited guests, after the collector had induced him through the friendship of the Secretary of the Treasury, to visit the city on his three months trip, spending an entire day and night, which was several times more than he gave any other city on his trip. The plans were marked out and approved before the invitation was accepted. Had it not been, there were men little enough on the entertainment committee of the city to have taken the management entirely out of the hands of the collector, and of those that he added in the beginning.

The collector was real glad that the plan for the new building was accepted, for the roof garden and the small park, that was to have been around the building would have been such a great pleasure to the people of the city. No sooner than Mr. Wilson was elected president, than there began a conspiracy against the collector to get him out, but his commission lacked two and a half years of being out (as the collector is always appointed for a term of four years), and he may not be removed except for good cause, until his commission expires, and, although no other in the United States was removed from office without cause, yet he was to be made an example of by one of those who waited upon him twice in one day telling him that he either had to join the Red Shirt club, or leave the town or have his

business destroyed and take the consequences. Whenever they could discredit him in any and every way that it could be brought about, they did so. It is strange, but true nevertheless, that whenever you have been deeply and grievously injured by another, without any cause, they are often the last one to forgive the one that they have injured. It is true that one of the three committeemen, who was not an active church worker, met the collector about two years after he was waited on by him, on one of the principal streets of the city, and asked the collector to let him talk with him. He was told to go ahead, and he commenced to apologize for what he had done, telling the collector that he was then willing to get down on his knees in the middle of the street and beg his pardon for the mean way that he had helped to treat him, and further stated that he had not been able to look him straight in the face since that time, his conscience had so annoyed him. The collector told him that he had forgiven him long ago, as it was not in his heart to carry malice against anyone, and he had no ill feeling toward him, as that was a matter for him and his Creator, for which he hoped that he had been forgiven. After that, he and the collector were again good friends, and the latter was in a position to throw many things in his way, which he did, and they were highly appreciated.

During the trial and persecution that Bennie went through, he often wondered why he was not allowed to remain dead when he was almost drowned at the old mill when a lad of six years of age. He had gone with his older brother to the mill to get corn ground, and they had gone in bathing. Getting in beyond his depth, he had gone down the last time, and was dived for, and brought out lifeless, apparently, and they rolled him on the dam until life came back. The last thoughts he remembered were that he would not see his papa and sisters any more, with no pain, only that of a strangle, except when coming to. When all had deserted him save his little

family, he could not but think that it would have been better for him to have died then, but God seemed to have a special purpose in protecting him then, as well as on other occasions.

In a short time afterwards, the attempt began to get rid of the collector. The news gatherers at Washington had hot and caustic articles concerning the dismissal of the collector, because he had in reorganizing the customs service of the State gone by the Treasurer's request to appoint the best qualified clerks they could obtain to fill the various places; but when article after article came out, which were circulated all over the State, claiming that he had not consulted the senior fox Senator, which he had no right to do, he then was accused of filling the offices with Republicans. When that was investigated, it was found that there had only been one deputy appointed out of the entire lot who was a Republican, all the rest being Democrats. The dispatch reporters often reported certain men in Washington who were connected with one of the larger banks, all being directors, and in a day or two the papers would be reporting that the old fox was determined to see that the present collector should go, and that a certain fox's man would be recommended for the place as well. He was also a director of the bank, as well as part owner of the leading newspaper in the city; and while the manager of the paper had often said of the then collector that he had done so much for the city in securing the appropriation and other things, that if he wanted the place he ought to have it as long as he lived. However, when the new aspirant came into the ring, the old collector could not get anything further in the controlled paper, but it began to cry to turn every one out who was not a Wilson idolater and who had refused to vote for him. Many of the other machine papers of the State said the same thing—that, as custodian, the new collector that was soon to be, would get a commission of six thousand to twelve thousand dollars on the building fund, and of course all he had to do was to have the six hun-

dred thousand dollars transferred to the bank, that he and his friends were interested in, and who were so often in Washington with him.

When a new set of batteries would be turned loose on the collector, it must have been after thinking of the twelve thousand commission and the six hundred thousand that would be placed in their bank. Of course, it must have looked good to them. But the collector was too well informed on customs regulations not to know that they were badly fooled. For twelve years he was custodian, and had never received one cent, as all moneys were kept in the treasury in Washington, and was only paid by vouchers, in new buildings, signed by the supervising architect, but he let the joke go on.

When the attacks began to occur almost daily on the collector, and no chance to deny anything through their kept paper, he went to Washington, saw the Secretary of the Treasury, who treated him kindly, and when he was asked if he had seen any of the papers in which the collector had been continuously attacked, he replied that he had had several marked copies sent him. He then asked if he would have the record of the present collector searched, from the time that he took the office to the present, to see how it stood. The Secretary replied that it had been thoroughly examined and was found to be number one, and said that they would not get the collector out by his consent. But as the old fox Senator had fallen in line by seniority promotion to be the chairman of the finance committee of the Senate, which gave him a powerful weapon over the Secretary of the Treasury, the collector, knowing it, said to the new Treasurer that if the old fox tried to take the advantage of this position in order to force the collector out, all the Treasurer had to do was to notify him, and, rather than embarrass him, he could have his resignation; that he had plowed an ox and would do so again if it became necessary. The collector was thanked, but was told that they would not get him out until his commission expired.

CHAPTER XII

BACK TO THE FARM

About sixty days after that, the collector received a privately marked letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, recalling what had been said about being embarrassed, and went on to say that he was continually being sought for the place, in order that it could be given to a friend of the party who was so anxious to get it for him. The collector's resignation went forward immediately. In a few days he received a letter of thanks, telling him to hold his office until he wrote him to turn it over to his successor. In the meantime the old fox Senator had had his young fox appointed collector, but for some cause it was held up for some weeks, but it was reported the presence of the young fox was often seen in Washington, and some of his acquaintances said that he showed nervousness, but after waiting and waiting for so long a time, his nomination was confirmed. After some days his commission was sent to the acting collector, marked "Private," but the collector being out of town when the letter came, the news was soon gotten to the newly appointed collector, who, it was said, got his information from the stenographer and bookkeeper, who was the only Wilson man in the office, and of course thought that he would be first deputy, but as soon as the new collector was apprised of his certificate of appointment in the postoffice, he goes down to the customshouse and requests the deputy collector to go to the postoffice and get it, and open same in the absence of the collector in charge. The deputy collector opened it, against his better judgment, and when the collector returned to his office the next morning he found the newly appointed collector in his chair, at his desk, who turned to the former collector, without any explanation, and wanted to know if there was anything

he could do for him. The only thing that was said by the former collector as he turned to walk out, was that "You will be sorry you got this office before you die."

In about ten days afterwards, the former collector received a letter, addressed to him, telling him to turn the office over to the newly appointed collector, but the old collector had gone to his farm, and the letter was forwarded to him there. The new collector had appropriated the time, eight to ten days pay, to himself, and continued to do so. It reminds one of Jezebel's cunningly devised plan to get for her husband, Ahab, Naboth's vineyard. God's word is always true, though, as long as light and life hold out. When a heart is penitent, He is ready to forgive. Through the long years of persecution, when it was popular to misrepresent the one who did not bow his knees to those who had so persistently sought to keep the misrepresentation in light, in order that the truth might remain buried, as it was so well planned and carried out, and is now written into history, dedicated by those who plotted the act, and did it so well that those who did not approve of it spoke not above a whisper for fear they would be classed a negro-lover, or to a worse fate.

When it became generally known that the press that the yellow negro had used to arouse so much bitterness belonged to one of the editors, and the building that he occupied belonged to another Democrat, the city aldermen appropriated money out of the treasury of the taxpayers, though without any tooting of horns, and paid for same, but it was not known whether or not it paid for the expense of running the negro newspaper, as it was claimed by the negroes, and white Republicans as well, and also the Populists, that not a single copy was taken by them nor allowed to enter their homes. A very frank old citizen, before he died, is said to have told who was the father of the article that caused the death of the innocent negroes, as well as the persecution and banish-

ing of some of the former Republican officeholders. The veil of mystery will soon be pulled off the faces of those who had things as they liked them to be seen.

THE GREAT ARTIST

Sunset at dear old Caledonia in Autumn's days,
When touched with tinges by the Great Artist's hand,
Reminds us of the grandeur which awaits one in heavenly land,
Where we will find all beauty by God's own hand.

The old river passing its water gently on,
Furnishes the background for the artist here who has begun
To bathe in the beauty of the life to be in this beauty land,
Where the beauty has been promised on every hand.

Why is mortal man so slow to understand?
That the Great Artist has ready prepared this glorious land,
There patiently waiting for every converted man,
In a land that its beauty and grandeur is more than man can understand.

Is man too busy to stop, think and understand,
Or is it he allows Satan around him to stand,
And fear man may become wise, expel Satan to his own land,
Where there will be legions of men who refused to understand?

This beauty land has been prepared for man.
Will you put Satan out and occupy this land?
For it is yours if you will only it accept,
By serving the great Artist, and Satan reject.

As soon as the new collector took charge, and the new tariff was made, the receipts began to fall off, so much so that the duties under the low tariff paid at the port scarcely paid the running expenses of the office; but to show that a great improvement was made by the new collector and the progressive administration at Washington, the old fox conceived a plan to boost the office of the little fox, who during the last election, when the old fox was running for reëlection against his opponent, the little fox wrote an article for the paper that he was interested in, almost claiming that the old Senator

was a supernatural power, and that the State had never had, nor probably would ever have again, his equal. (About three-fourths of the people agreed with his last statement.) To boost the new collector's office, seeing that it was running on the back track, the big head of the finance committee of the Senate had all of the internal revenues that were collected in the State, which formerly were sent direct to the treasury, sent through the collector's office of the old town, then on to Washington, amounting to over a million yearly, though it did not add one cent to the duty collected at the old port, but his administration was given credit for the great increase through the kept paper that he was connected with. Columns of it were used to show the world what a wonderful collector he was. The machine papers of the State sang his praise, as was expected, not knowing or caring that it was only a confidence game. With this big increase, the old foxy Senator introduced a bill, got it through the Senate, to double the collector's salary, owing to the fine showing in collection, as well as the fine trained men that he found in the office. It had to go through the House before it became a law, and as the chairman of the finance committee of the House was well known to those who were keeping up with the game, and was giving a full history of the facts in the case, as dated from the time the plotters had decided to take the leased vineyard, and being familiar with the work of the former collector in building up the port, he himself lending his good influence in getting the appropriation of six hundred thousand dollars, and seeing the new collector's receipts had fallen off so materially, he put his foot down on the increase and did not allow it to pass.

The old fox Senator did not think that when he was using his influence against the old collector in having his salary and commission reduced from thirty-six hundred dollars a year to twenty-five hundred that it would be against himself later on, yet the twenty-five hundred that the old collector's salary was placed at by the Senate was the lowest price of

any in the country that had anything like half as much duty as was collected by the former collector. Little did he think that he was doing the thing that later would react against his plans, nor had he thought probable that the seed that one sows he will have to reap.

Before the former collector was out of office, the supervising architect at Washington had about gotten down to the new customs-house in the old town, as there were about sixty buildings ahead of it, and each one had to take its place on the list, but for some cause the new building was held back for some time, until the old collector could be disposed of; then at once great interest was manifested in beginning the new building, and the old plans that were drawn by the old architect, with suggestions of the former collector, were put aside for a new one, leaving out the roof garden, plot, grass, shrubbery, the walks, with seats for the weary to enjoy the breeze, as well as the music from the band. Everything was changed, of course, but sadly for the interests of those who have been denied the pleasure that was intended for them under the plan of the old architect.

After two or three years the building was completed by the supervising architect and with the assistant who remained with the job, and it stands there today as a monument to many a trial and tribulation.

One of the largest shippers of the country wrote the former collector, after he retired to his farm, to take the sunshine, the dew and the rain, finishing his children with the practical part of their education, that his monument was ready built out of granite that would stand through the centuries to come.

INGRATITUDE

Alone in sadness, only my Creator as Comforter,
I find my own will steeped in Sin and Selfishness,
But it is through Him I discover my weakness,
And by His grace my weakness makes my strength.

Left alone by flatterers I deemed my friends,
I flee from their presence to my country home,
There to labor in my declining years with my hands and hoe,
And forget ingratitude and raise peas, corn, potatoes, if no more.

But cotton, wheat and rye is essential as are things to fry,
While beef, pork and mutton may satisfy the glutton;
Yet our lives are not our own,
And we to others should kindness show, by word if nothing more.

Life, after all, is one's self in a passing scene,
To be interpreted and assorted by the screen,
Separating the good from the bad, by the Great Judge.
Will we be found with the honest in heart, or as a tinkling sound?

Our friends are many in the days of plenty;
Their smiles and nods are with us on every street;
But when you can no longer serve many of them,
You are as soon forgotten as an autumn leaf.

Why, then, be so foolish as to forget God our Creator,
When in Him we find the only friend with us to stay—
One who never fails us when man runs away?
He is always ready to comfort us to the last day.

But when the new collector failed to get the increase in salary, he soon resigned, and took with him, or tried to take, the credit of all the big monument, and would have, had it not been for thousands of honest people all over the country, especially in Washington, and by every Congressman in the State, who helped when they could, by word or deed.

About this time the World War was on, and the former collector, who was transferred from luxury to slavery at seven years old, to take up the work of the former slaves, knew what war meant, and the slavery that would follow it, and at his spare time he was writing to each Senator and Representative at Washington, before this country got into the war, begging them to keep us out of the mad slaughter-pen of Europe, as it was a war of jealousy, envy, and plunder, and if we were forced into it we would only be able to see the glory of our beautiful country by looking at it backwards, but if we remained out, when they in their madness finished

destroying each other, scuttling their own ships, we would be able to give them a helping hand until they got on their feet again.

He referred them to the critical condition the South was left in, though only a star on the world's map. He knew then that the speculators, international bankers and their agents were raising a campaign of propaganda, controlling hundreds of the largest dailies that they had gotten control of, with their pot-metal plates for the weeklies, and that the hundreds of thousands of various societies, the product of those that were trying to get us into it, were financed by our own money, furnished by the international banks, and finally by our own country and taxpayers, which ought to be a warning to every honest man and woman, as well as to our lawmakers.

A great majority of those who were pleaded with to keep us out claimed that they saw it in the same light; but a short time afterwards the propagandists of the controlled press became so bitter that honest public opinion was swept aside, and war was declared. The plotters had won their first skirmish, and no wonder that many of the stout-hearted wept while they voted yea; and while we won in name, still the world is badly defeated, and it will be generations before the new order will be as of old, and we will have to acknowledge our deception before God before we have peace. An old friend who, with his great influence and fine diplomacy, had been implored to use his good influence to keep us out, replied that he was sorry to hear that his friend was so disturbed over the likelihood of this country's getting into the war, which no doubt it would, but it would be the best thing, as it would be only three or four months after our country entered in before we would finish it up, then everything would become all right and normal again. But, with the income-tax collector, with every other tax that is and will be for years to follow, the old friend will have time to have another think coming.

As soon as war was declared, every lover of his country knew that there was nothing else to do but to roll up their sleeves and do their best to win—either whip or be whipped; the latter was not thinkable; and the former collector, now farmer, had two sons to volunteer their services at the very beginning. A third one, who was running the larger farm, insisted that he was ready to go any time, but with all labor gone where they were getting from five to ten dollars a day, which left the large farm helpless, except what could be produced by the manager with machinery, in person, and the cry for raising more foodstuffs coming from everywhere, caused the best farmer of his county to be left for later call. His crops, raised mostly by himself and machinery, with a few children, were no doubt the best raised in the county. None of his sons had any pull, and had to stand upon their own merits. Those that volunteered from college went up the ladder, no doubt deserving their promotion. The old collector, with his two little boys, the eleven-year-old one doing the plowing, the afflicted one doing the hoeing with his father, did all that he could until he had to take his bed, then to the hospital.

IN AND OUT THE HOSPITAL

The hospital is a wonderful place,
Often relieves one's ills and cures their case,
But now I begin to think it is time for me to leave,
As I feel that I have been greatly relieved.

Yes, the hospital is a wonderful place.
They are either taking them in or taking them out—
Some alive, some are dead,
Some on stretchers, some on beds.

It is wonderful that no death you hear
While in the hospital, and you so near;
Yet in the morning when in the papers you read,
You often find some one has passed into the dead sea.

Yet it is well that all that happens in the hospital we do not know,
For we might become frightened and would want to go,
For fear we might be taken out in our sleep,
Through a mistake, wrapped up in a white sheet.

When he returned home he would work until the pain would force him to his couch or bed; doing more than he was able to do to produce food for the boys, who had to be clothed and fed while in the war, fighting for their lives.

About the time the war began, the farmer was entreated by letters from people all over his congressional district, asking him to make the race for Congress. While he had no special desire, as he wrote them, to go to Congress, yet if it was the wish of the majority of his district, he would make the race in order to try to help the farmer get his rights in banking, as the commercial and national bankers had, that they might borrow money direct from the government on long and short time loans, at the same rate of interest that the commercial and national banks had borrowed from the government, in order that the farmer could hold his products and fix his own prices, instead of the international and commercial banks fixing it, as is the case now. If it was their desire, he would do his best to serve them to the very best of his ability. He did not send out over a dozen or two of these letters, and told his friends that while he was opposed to our entering the war, sending our sons to the slaughter-pen of Europe, yet since we were in it we had to win, and we must do everything possible to do so, and to hold up the hands of our President, who was our leader. He only sent out a few of these letters, as he had come to the conclusion that it was no time to talk politics or have any thought but to give all of his mind and thought to the winning of the war, and let such things take care of themselves later.

THE DOCTOR AND NURSE

The patient, with his ails, to the hospital he hails,
There to meet the skilled physician, who puts on no frills,
But calls in the kind, white-capped nurse, who shows no ruffles,
But for one's comfort they are soon on a hustle.

What a blessing the hospital is to humanity,
Founded upon man's love to his brother man,
Where pain and suffering finds friends anxious to relieve,
Willing and waiting to share one's griefs.

Do not complain if your bell is not answered before one can think,
As the kind, white-capped nurses are continually on their feet,
Honestly endeavoring to do their best
To relieve our pain and make us well again.

Then be patient with the doctor and the nurse,
For often they will relieve you from the worse
Old stomach pain that has been your curse,
So be patient with the doctor and the nurse.

The white-capped nurse often from the country comes,
Where the beautiful forest, with its blossoms so sweet,
Has shaped her kind hands to the restoration of mankind;
Then sing honor and praise to her glorious name.

One of the letters that was mailed out got into the hands of some political enemies, or special interest, who were ready to do anything to defeat him in anything that he undertook. When it got into the hands of the attorney of the new collector, the letter was printed in their paper, with piecemeal comment between the gaps, creating all the prejudice against the farmer, even claiming that it was treason to issue a letter at that time, when every one should have his attention on winning the war, but they did not tell that the letter was sent out several months prior to the time that they published it, nor did they tell their readers, nor the wild-eyed papers that copied it, that this farmer was working every day on his farm when he was physically not able, with his entire family, from near sunrise to sunset, when not absolutely forced to take his bed from sheer exhaustion, endeavoring to raise all the foodstuffs possible to feed the armies, as well as the wild-mouthed loafers and the attorneys of his kind.

The new collector's attorney, being one of the vigilant committees of the State, had to prove his worth by his work, and a special detective from Philadelphia soon after drove up to the farmer's home, with the sheriff and his deputy.

Arriving there about noon, they were invited to go in and eat with the family. Before doing so, the detective pulled out a copy of the letter that the overwrought supposed patriots, who did lip-work and raising, no doubt, funds from the profiteers upon what the farmers had produced, had given him. The profiteers were fast becoming piggie millionaires, and of course were glad to show their appreciation of the good things that they were getting out of the war, and every one who viewed matters in a plain, truthful way was an enemy.

The detective read one paragraph after another of the letter, asking the meaning of each. The farmer told him that they expressed the thought of the writer, who was and had been doing all that he could to help his country. Having learned how the ousted collector had been treated by those who were after him, and how he was put out of his office without cause before his lease was out, and was still the target of some of those who had treated him badly years before, who had not yet forgiven him, the detective remarked that it was about as he had expected, as he had confidentially inquired of those that he came in touch with that knew him, and all had given him the most praiseworthy reputation. He added, in leaving, that he was glad he came to investigate for himself.

It is the hope of the farmer that those who have tried to injure him and his will be forgiven, as it is not in his heart to hold malice against any one; and many of those little things, as they may appear to some, will not be little when the people have become able to think in a cool, sober way. This is being written that those who read may be warned not to be led into deeds and actions that they may bitterly regret later, as all of us are our brothers' keepers.

During the many years that he lived in the old city, he farmed all the while, having a manager to supervise the farm. His family spent three months on the farm each year, the boys working as other laborers, the girls also learning how

to work and to use their needles in making their own clothes, should it become necessary. It was the best part of their entire education, even including their college course, as they are all appreciated for their worth by those who know them, and are at the forefront in all that they undertake to do.

The public improvements that have been such a blessing to hundreds in the reclaiming and draining of vast quantities of worthless land is now a blessing to the community. Good roads, nice schools and churches are producing a new and thriving generation that could not have grown up under old conditions.

The experiment with ground phosphate lime and marl proved them far superior to burned lime for agricultural purposes. They are among the many helps which the former collector introduced, which have been adopted by the Department of Agriculture at Washington and are being used all over the United States in place of the old burnt lime that destroyed the humus in soil.

He fought for twenty-five years for good roads and forest protection, when they were so new to the politicians and editors that they wondered if he thought people were fools enough to be taxed for good roads for other people to ride over, and his long fight in this State for forest protection, which meant to keep the stock from running at large, caused him thousands of dollars of loss, with enemies multiplied, who were against being pulled out of the rut and on the road to improvement.

Having to chip a task and a half of boxes when he was seventeen years old, he discovered that cutting holes into the pine tree was fast destroying the forests, and he conceived the idea of digging a hole in the ground and letting the turpentine run into it, or placing a cup at the bottom of the tree to catch the turpentine in. He wrote a letter to some of the leading papers advocating the idea, and the Forest Department adopted it. They experimented on a forest in Florida, and approved of the plan, and sent out their bulle-

tins over the turpentine belt, advising the use of the cup instead of cutting holes in the pines, just as the bulletins were distributed later advising the use of ground phosphate lime in the place of burnt lime.

During the last war, when fertilizer ingredients were so scarce and hard to get, except cotton-seed meal and phosphate acid, he was requested by the State Department of Agriculture to get up a formula for fertilizer. This he did, including mostly ground lime, phosphate acid, fish scrap or cotton-seed meal, which was printed and sent out in bulletins to the farmers in the State, and no better crops were made.

The hardest task that one has to encounter, if he happens to be progressive, is trying to get people out of old ruts. They will curse, as a rule, any one who attempts it, but may later see their error, and will follow if it is at a long distance. The collector and farmer has lived longer, if time were measured by what one accomplishes, than the average man, should he live beyond the century mark, and while he is now over threescore years of age, and in feeble health, he is as active as the average man of much younger age. While his ideas have always been progressive, yet he can always learn something from most every one he meets. Having worked at such a great disadvantage, yet he can look back and see that it was not in vain, if cursed at times, yet followed, if years afterward. It is a pleasure to him to see the great fields of growing crops on land that was once a wilderness, inhabited mostly by frogs, snakes, and their kind, converted into the finest farms, producing anything that is grown in the State.

Magnificent churches and schools have been built by those who own these farms, many of them having also improved their homes and made them better places for their families. Surrounded by splendid forests, they can appreciate real art and never tire of its beauty, when nature dresses in her spring, summer, and autumn garments, that remind us of the glorious things that have been given us, and a stepping-

stone of beauty to those who here appreciate and protect the little things that have been entrusted to their care. Those who do not appreciate these wonderful gifts are to be pitied. If they would think for a moment, they would realize how easily their homes could be adorned and surrounded with the beautiful flowers which are in reach of all, as well as the lofty tree that was given us for so many purposes, that are continually stretching out their finger ends toward their Creator, singing with the breeze in reverence to their Giver. What a blessing we have in them, yet they are shamefully neglected by the average person because the children have not been properly trained to appreciate and love the many beautiful things in nature, with which we are surrounded from the cradle to the grave. The wonderful pictures painted by the hand of God are in reach of all. The humblest can enjoy them as well as the rich, and parents should not neglect to impress their children with the pleasure to be derived from so great an inheritance.

Bennie never has sincerely regretted that he did not move away from the town where he was persecuted, as one of his wealthy Northern friends offered to put in his hands one hundred thousand dollars if he would move away, and agreed to give another fifty thousand if he needed it, but he knew that if he left they would say that he would not have left if he had been innocent of what the persecutors had heaped upon him, and he had rather stay and live to prove that they were falsifiers, as they were.

Truth is the daughter of time, and what is in us of the image of God is the love of truth and justice.

Shall we our country's noble tradition forsake—
Those that have made our people so noble and great?
No, not to the Big Four in their desperate straits,
Which are trying to control the world and our country unmake.

They think they have found here some of their kind,
Who are attempting to tie our hands and keep us blind.
All the lovers of the true American kind
Are asked to surrender and be of the European mind.

A world's empire they are striving to create,
Composed of the Big Four, they think they can mate,
For England, with her colonies to dominate,
And America's grand institutions will be only a fake.

Let not party nor prejudice be our guide,
But study the grave questions from all sides,
Before we again become a colony, controlled by the Big Four,
And our liberties, our traditions all swept aside.

Let us have a just peace that will end wars,
And stay in America and cling close to the cross;
Let Europe and the Orient over there do the same,
And none of us will have a cause to be ashamed.

POEMS

POEMS

THE COTTAGE ON THE BANK

During storm, January 28, 1921

The cottage resting upon the river bank,
Surrounded by nature's lovely forest,
Tells the story of our Creator's artistic love,
Adorned by flowers, songbirds and the dove.

The cottage has memories dear and near,
The river breezes whisper gently in our ears
Of the many happy days of our lives,
As the breeze sings gently to the skies.

Yet when the winter storm comes with its frown,
We feel safe, as the cottage is upon solid ground.
Our thoughts are continually resting upon Him,
Who is anxious and willing to forgive our sins.

The windstorm sings its songs around the gables,
Sometimes loud, fierce and strong;
But we only have to remember
Our faith, our cottage is built upon solid ground.

The storm passes, the sunshine becomes sublime,
Our faith, our hopes are more inclined
To see the beauty that continues to climb
To the beautiful abode that will be mine.

TO CHURCH WE GO

If it is to the church you go
To learn the things you should know,
Then upon you the pleasure will grow,
The more to the church you go.

But if to the church you go,
Your finery to others show,
You'd better stay home and not go,
Lest you will find others running your show.

If to the church you and your fellow go,
It will be well for all to know
That it is your fellow you are getting to go,
So that good example set by you others may know.

THE RIVER SWAMP ROAD

What a trial I have had to bear no one but my Creator knows,
In building a highway that was promised years ago.
Twenty years my efforts were in vain,
Until I began to realize my life was fast ebbing away.

Five long months the old dredge, with tortoise gait,
Puffed, creened, shook, until it and I seemed a fake.
We had few friends, but scores of dissenters,
They using their influence more than a plenty.

To see the canal by the side of the highway, none to surpass,
One could not think the canal, dug through thousands of stumps,
Some so large, eyes and mind could scarcely believe
That twenty-odd sticks of dynamite required their release.

Many over two feet under the ground, over thirty feet around,
With second-growth timber over three feet through,
Convinces one that Columbus was not the first to discover our land,
But there were a former people in arts mighty and grand.

For twenty years, pleading, year in and out, but in vain,
To get Pender's commissioners to build the river swamp road,
But not until raising sons who were taught never backwards go,
They, with faithful Cameron Johnson and crew, put the job through.

The roadbed filled with marl and mud-topped two feet with gravel-sand,
Makes a highway grand, and will ever stand.
When generations unborn will enjoy the labor of others,
They will exclaim, some one's work made them fame.

AGAINST THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Dear Brother Johnson:—I have just read Dr. Truett's fine address in this week's issue, but I am one of those that believe if he had studied both sides of the League of Nations as brought back from Europe by Mr. Wilson, that he would have another opinion of it.

It was born in deception. Mr. Wilson's fourteen points looked fair and resembled justice, and notwithstanding they were sanctioned by England, France, Italy, and Japan, apparently to deceive the honest people of the world, even deluded the enemy and caused

them to revolt against their own country, expecting they, the allies, were fighting for justice and real democracy. But behold! What has a trusting world discovered? Instead of a war for justice to the conquered, with no change of boundaries nor indemnities, we find that England, France, Italy, and Japan have formed one mighty empire to take from the enemy all they can by leaving them slaves. And now they want the United States to join the combination of plunderers, that we may continue to send our sons and means to all parts of the world to keep intact for the plunderers the ill-gotten gains they have taken or stolen from a naked, helpless people.

No wonder the great mass of honest people are turning away from such partners as fast as the veil of deception is lifted from their eyes, and I believe as firmly as I believe in a true and just God that the mighty hand of justice will rebuke in some way such treacherous actions in nations as well as in individuals, and the Baptist organ of a great denomination is doing a great injustice to our teaching to condone such conduct in nations or individuals, is my opinion.

All true men want to see peace and the ending of wars, but they do not want to let the deceptives dictate to the honest, as the allies are trying to do, since they have succeeded in plundering the world on the pretense of democracy.

WHEN JUSTICE IS GIVEN THE FARMER, THEN HE WILL BE AS DESCRIBED IN VERSE

The grand old farmer, it is the soil he loves;
It brings food and raiment to all mankind;
But for centuries he got only what he could eat,
Until now his oppressors are on the retreat.

The speculator over his crop would watch;
For centuries it fell to their lot
To work and toil without any reward,
Until now they, the farmers' prosperity means meat to them all.

The day is breaking since the farmer is being educated,
And no longer the speculator will control;
So all humanity will share in his blessing,
Since the educated farmer began progressing.

Wake up, all classes; gather even the masses;
Give praise to the man who feeds you while through life you are passing,
For it is to him, not his oppressor,
That his relief and comfort will also bring to you blessings.

The man who would bind you by party chains,
This same man will sell you later for gain.
If it is your liberty you want to gain,
Beware of this party man who over party goes insane.

The party man, with his gang,
His business is to fool every man he can;
Praising his party until he has you complete,
Then to his bosses he will sell you as he would so much meat.

So beware of the rank party man,
For he is more treacherous than drifting sand;
Though he may be honest, but does not understand
That it takes reasoning to become a broadminded man.

JIM AND KATE

Dese young niggers dey some sight,
Dey romp all day and all night;
Dey mammy she goes about crazy
When she sees de young niggers is so lazy.

What we is to do I cannot see,
For Mosser Ben crib it done and fail,
And dis year dere is no hay,
And when I go to de little store, dunno what to say.

Sure dey little store are high and mighty shy,
And you get nothing out of them less you lie.
If you lie when de officer comes, de old woman she will begin to cry,
And save my life it looks like we all going to die.

De only way I see to do is go to the war, fight dem Huns
Until de last one of them is on the run,
Den when I comes back Kate and I
We will be somebody way up high.

So I am just as happy as I can be,
To think I am willing to do so much for my country.
When dem lazy niggers me dey will see,
Dey will say sure der's one nigger I would like to be.

HOG-KILLING TIME

Hog-killing time on the farm is great;
The sausages, spare-ribs, puddings, all well mates;
Everybody is happy as eats can make.
I tell you, hog-killing time on the farm is something great.

The old women who prepare the hog dainties, all of their own make,
Find time to make some extra for their neighbors' sake—
All because the neighbors, they too sometimes make,
And to have reciprocal neighbors, we have to give and take.

The city folks oftentimes get a taste
Of some of the nice things out of the pigs we make,
But often it is stale, and not always as well made
As the dainties made by careful hands who make for their own plate.

Yet while the city folks have their revels and fun,
We country people do not have to go in a run;
Still we have the best of everything that pig meat can make.
I tell you, an old oven with a good cook is no fake.

The pig feet, when well fried, are hard to beat;
And the chitterlings, too, are good to eat;
Then there is the hog's head, when made to souse,
Is so rich and tasty it is enough to give one the gout.

"CHILDREN ARE CHILDREN"

The aged person complains of things that seem insane;
The youthful laughs, says we are not to blame,
For Father and Mother were, too, once gay,
And forget that it is natural for children to love to play.

Then do not think that children are not like children then,
For nature is the same, if we do forget and complain
Of the things in their nature that does not always seem sane,
For it is only Father and Mother living Childhood over again.

There are distinctions in everything,
Then why not well mannered children have their play,
Lest they become insane, instead of being innocent and gay,
For children are children and must have their play.

OBITUARY TO "OLD BOOZE"

(In Mercy Hospital, Baltimore, the day booze was outlawed)

Oh, you booze, the booze of old,
You who have made so many gray and old,
Can now bow your head in infamous shame,
As we know your death is man's gain.

For centuries you have debauched man,
And have dressed in rags all you can;
Now, mothers, wives, children and friends
Can say, at last you have your reward. Amen.

The wives you have sent to their graves,
The happy homes you have unmade,
Stand as a witness against you today,
And will keep you forever at bay.

The asylums that you have filled,
For your greed, when you knew it would kill;
The wretchedness that you have made,
Is the curse that will be with you in your grave.

THE PICTURE SHOW

The moving-picture show is where most all go,
Yet the more they go, the less they know
About things in life that to them would be worth more,
When in life they begin to grow old.

If for wisdom you want to gain,
Take your books from authors of fame;
Give your time while you have a bright mind;
It will be worth in the end more than a gold mine.

So select your companions of the best minds,
If you seek the best in the world to find.
When you do, your company will be refined,
And you will find it more pleasant all the time.

So use your talents for what they were intended—
Not stifle them for the picture show.
If you do, you will soon not want to go,
But will love the things that will learn you more.

THE NEGLECTED GIRL

The little spoiled girl of the cross-roads town,
That meets all trains, under any strain,
Throwing her smiles and blinking her eyes
To every boy for miles she can spy.

It is the same girl that leaves to her mother
All the drudgery work to do,
Going through the world, giving it a bad spell of the blues,
All because the world sees she will not do.

Who is to blame but Ma and Pa
If this thoughtless girl goes to the bad?
The fickle will laugh when she smiles—
At the same time she they will despise.

Help the little, spoiled, neglected girl
To see the danger around her lures;
That as she grows old, help her to learn more,
Before her life's journey is over.

MOTHERS' CLUB

The war, in all its various forms,
Everything upside down, trouble just begun,
Every notoriety-seeker on the run,
Trying to get every one but himself to shoulder his gun.

Some are starving, others freezing;
Some coughing, others sneezing,
All because our love to our fellow-man is not pleasing
To our Creator, who alone can keep us from starving and freezing.

Some sincere, others deluded;
Some trying to imitate their rulers;
Some sincere, some fakes,
While many see nothing but spies and snakes.

So the war in all its various forms
Will bring to us many reforms—
Some for good, some for bad—
Most of them, we fear, will be to us sad.

Who is to take the mother's place
While at the club she mostly stays?
The poor little child is being beguiled,
For the lack of the true mother's smile.

Who are to train the wives of our sons
If the work at home is not begun
By the love and gentle care
Of the mother, whose God she doth fear?

Woe, then, to the country whose women do not care
What becomes of their children when they are not near—
Attending their meetings, others get their greetings,
The children at home from their servants get their beatings.

THE RISING SUN

The morning sun from under the skies
Peeps out so radiant and bright
That when its beauty we behold,
For grandeur, sublimity, we cannot ask for more.

When it peeps from out of the east,
The sparkling dew then bids the sun adieu,
Until at noon, when the dew is subdued,
The sun faces the west, where its beauty looks the best.

So it is the sun that stands so bright and high,
Yet everything on earth to it is drawn nigh,
For our Creator gave it to serve us before the world was,
And we all proudly say His work was well done.

Then sing praise to Him of the beauty that surrounds our life,
For it is more grandeur than we deserve.
If it was not by the hand of our kind Creator,
Satan would soon have one as an imitator.

The beautiful sun, when it is in the west,
Represents the work of an honest man when he is at his best—
Representing all that stands for the best,
Though he may no longer be here, his work will tell the rest.

DEDICATED TO THE STAFF AND NURSES AT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

(In bed, James Walker Memorial Hospital, Jan. 23, 1918)

The kind-hearted nurse, with her rosy cheeks,
Whose eyes are as bright as the sparkling dew,
Arranges your bed with her careful hands,
That when you fall asleep you dream you are in the fairy land.

It's Miss Lena McLean, whose manners are so cute,
Her gentle look is enough to subdue the brute;
Her plump cheeks, with her lips so red,
Make the patient forget he is confined to his bed.

What a nurse she would be in a hospital camp,
Where the wounded boy could clasp her hand,
Where he would soon learn to obey her gentle command
As if he was on the firing line, fighting for his sacred land.

Her rosy cheeks, with her pleasant smiles,
We all soon learn to love or admire;
Her duty, the Red Cross nurse never neglects,
Though the patient may be only a bundle of frets.

Oh, what a noble calling it is to be a good nurse—
One that can soothe the pain and make us well again.
It is with such a nurse that our blessings come from on high,
Though her reward will come only when she goes to her home in the skies.

The poor, friendless man, with his loathsome disease,
For relief and safety to the hospital he they speed,
While the nurse, without one word of discontent,
Administers to his needs as though he was a king of great descent.

Then hurrah! hurrah! for the Red Cross nurse,
For it is to them the afflicted owe so much
That we never, never can repay,
But can say hurrah! hurrah! for the Red Cross nurse.

Appreciative thoughts of Casper Dails, the Tramp,
in thinking of his—

"SISTER MAGGIE"

My loving sister Oh, how dear,
Who always to me has been so near,
May the shining angels over her watch,
May peace and joy always be her lot.

A sister who can be so kind,
Will have the love of all mankind,
May her noble worth to those on earth,
Give her a home, a heavenly berth.

To the hospital me she has often sent,
To cure my pains, make me well again,
Now I sing praise to her glorious name,
For her noble deeds to the helpless, gives her
fame.

OPEN LETTER TO FARMERS AND FRIENDS, 1922

Since there are only twenty-two farmers in the United States Congress, as compared with two hundred and eighty-nine lawyers and one hundred and ninety-nine business men, is it any wonder that the farming interests, the pillow that all other business is resting upon, is crushed to the ground, not only destroying the hope of agriculture, but eventually all other businesses and classes will reach the pitiable position that the farming interest has been forced to occupy, *i. e.*, white slaves, because its friends have not been at court to see that justice has been given them, the same as to the banker and business men who, through the national banking system inaugurated by President Lincoln as an emergency in time of war, but with the purpose that it should be repealed or would finally destroy our republic by making it possible for the few who control our banks to control the wealth of our country. The system would have been repealed had Lincoln lived, but those who controlled the banks saw that they controlled the destiny of the nation, including all its people. Thus we see millionaires springing up like toadstools over night.

This gigantic robbery, under the sanction of the law, is now controlling the Government, and is it any wonder that the farmer of today has less protection than the negro slave of the Old South

from their masters before the Civil War? Agriculture has come to the parting of the roads; it asks for justice—no more and no less—in that we demand a banking system exclusively for the farming interests and stockraisers, divorced completely from the commercial and international banks, by which it may be made to function the same as commercial banks, without being blocked with red tape, and that the farmer and producer may borrow from said banks on short and long time loans at the same rate of interest that the commercial and international banks borrow.

The Farm Loan Banks secure their loans by mortgages on farm products, on short loans, and on farm lands on long-time loans. When Congress realized the critical period that is before us and joined with the few friends who are trying to save their country, rather than destroy it by being led further into European affairs by the international banks and gamblers, then will we see the farmer and producer for the first time in fifty years able to make the price of his own-raised products, and not until then will co-operative marketing be of much benefit to the farmer. We all realize (certainly the international bankers do) that he who controls our money controls the price of our products.

The Farm Loan Banks, managed by business farmers or friends of the agricultural interests, will enable the farmer to make a decent living, educate his children, giving them the same advantages other children have, and then we will see *all classes prosper*, the *bankers included*, and farm life will take its rightful place in our nation, where it has been so long oppressed.

If the farmer has banking facilities suitable to his needs, he will be ready to use co-operative marketing to its fullest advantages, and through their warehouses and packing systems would be enabled to sell their surplus products in foreign markets, after supplying this country, thus getting the extra profit, or part of it, that the controllers of our money—price-fixers—get for it, and which enriches them alone, at the expense of the *helpless producers*, as well as the consumers. We will never see peace restored until justice is given to producers, who in turn can relieve the *consumers* of farm products. This done, you will see new life in all classes of business. Those in Europe and elsewhere will be supplied to a great extent by those who produce their needs as each co-operative organization will supply their portion of their needs. This will enable all producers (whether they are able or not to borrow from the Farm Loan Banks, for the lack of proper security or reputations) to join the co-operative marketing association and get full benefit of these associations, at the same time keeping them out of the hands of the gamblers who have been giving them the least they could to eke out a mere living. No wonder our children want to leave the farm, where they can make only a scanty living, and crowd the cities, when they see their efforts is only slavery for themselves, while

others are enjoying all the profits on what they have produced. Will you help to right this wrong by writing your Congressman, Senators and friends to give us the remedy now, before it is too late, as oppression produces radicalism? The Farm Bloc is fighting our battle. Ask your Representative to join with them to give us the desired relief. If they refuse, send a new Representative next time.

Under this system the farmers would soon be able to finance themselves without Government aid.

OPEN LETTER TO HON. HENRY WALLACE, SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

CURRIE, N. C., September 28, 1922.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY:

You may remember that I wrote you in the spring, asking that you call together three or four hundred real dirt farmers—no speculators or bankers, only dirt farmers—to meet in conference in Washington on December 6th and 7th.

I have written to farmers in almost every State, feeling them out on coming together and try to agree upon a banking system that will mean a permanent help to the agricultural interests, which, of course, will mean relief to all other classes of business and people. The present banking system gives more power and wealth to the bankers, which enables them to wind their web tighter around the farmer by lending them bank credits, doubled up, and notes, etc., received from the farmers, rediscounted at the twelve regional banks, and loaned again and again until the banks are getting interest eight or ten times out of the producers (at 6 to 8 per cent) on the real money they have in their banks, thus drawing blood out, or interest out of the producers faster than real, honest wealth can be produced, and is it any wonder that we are getting worse off each year, having to humiliate ourselves by being forced to beg individuals, money lenders, to lend us what the Government (Congress) has given a few, less than one-half of one per cent of the people, the power to tax at their own will the remainder of the 99½ per cent of the people.

Why not lend the producers the Government credit direct, secured, of course, at the same rate of interest the Government lends to the favored bankers, who are allowed to multiply their interest eight or ten times at 6 and 8 per cent? If Mr. Harding will ignore the wreckers of the world today, and keep them from handling the money for the farmer and other classes by advocating direct loans to the agricultural and wealth-producing interests of the Government credits, same as the old-time greenbacks that saved the country in time of its greatest peril, he will not only save it now from collapse,

but it will restore peace and prosperity the world over, as all other nations will gladly follow suit. The Government to collect interest on all loans which would help to pay expenses of government.

I ask if you will take the matter up with the President to call a conference of real dirt farmers to meet in Washington, December 6th and 7th, to be heard on their needs in the way of banking.

If the President will use his good offices in this direction, and insist on a bill divorcing the farmers from the money trust, there would be no power, save above, from keeping the people from renominating and electing him; but should the money trust succeed in defeating this plan that will mean relief, then you will see the issue squarely drawn between the people and the banking trust, and their money and subsidized press and so-called Congressmen and Senators will not be able to save them from the wrath of a long-suffering people.

I hope you will let me hear from you; also would thank you to be kind enough to place this letter before the President for his consideration and approval, as I have the greatest confidence in his desire to serve all the people to the best of his ability.

With best wishes, and thanking you in advance, I am

Yours respectfully,

B. F. KEITH, Farmer.

THE END